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SREE KRISHNA CHAITANYA

All Glory to Guru and Gauranga

SREE KRISHNA CHAITANYA

VOL. I

BY

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WITH A FOREWORD

BY

PARAMAHANSA PARIBRAJAKACHARYYA (108) SREE

BHAKTI SIDDHANTA SARASWATI GOSWAMI

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Paramahansa Sree Sreemad
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नम ओं विष्णुपादाय कृष्णप्रेष्टाय भूतले ।

श्रीमते भक्तिसिद्धान्तसरस्वतीतिनामिने ॥

श्रीवार्षभानवीदेवीदयिताय कृपाव्यये ।

कृष्णसम्बन्धविज्ञानदायिने प्रभवे नमः ॥

माधुर्योज्ज्वलप्रेमाढय-श्रीरूपानुगभक्तिद ।

श्रीगौरकरुणाशक्तिविग्रहाय नमोऽस्तु ते ॥

नमस्ते गौरवाणीश्रीमूर्तये दीनतारिणे ।

रूपानुगविरुद्धापसिद्धान्तध्वान्तहारिणे ॥

नमो महावदान्याय कृष्णप्रेमप्रदाय ते ।

कृष्णाय कृष्णचैतन्यनाम्ने गौरत्विषे नमः ॥

FOREWORD

MEN of culture are often found to devote themselves in acquiring knowledge of various subjects which could prove efficacious to them in their needs; so we may not confuse to accept all readers in the same line of thought. The best scrutinisers of knowledge in their cultural extension should possess all skill and dexterity to get their most covetable end having had a care for Eternity and uninterrupted Blissful unalloyed Knowledge. This incarnate of the acme of knowledge-seekers will be the best reader of this book when they can have the privilege of comparing the merits of different views of pure theists. Mental speculationists have diverse objects of investigation and their diversity of seeking Knowledge would simply disturb the peaceful mentality having been tempted by the duping features of external manifestations, quite suitable and dove-tailing the present purposes of enjoyment by their imperfect senses.

The writer has got the prime object of furnishing a comparative study in which the position of a reader has the highest place. This is his only ambition, of healing the depraved mentality of the so-called culturists of True Knowledge. But the readers have different motives of utilising the product of their enterprise of perusing the book. One class of readers are found to criticise the merits and demerits of the writer in order to establish their superiority, with a view to puff up their vanity. Another class is observed to muse over the subject by spending their time for the gratification of their senses. The third section of readers mean to profit by reading the book in order to regulate their life for a better purpose. The under-estimation of a desirable element for some utilisation through temporal gratification of senses, would not equipoise the third position of the reader who will surely mark the distinctive situation by comparing other things and agree with the author in spending his valuable time for true amelioration.

The body of the book will appear before readers as a historical account of the Journey of life of a Hero. But the Hero is not an ordinary mundane hero for a hallucinative ambition with a spiritual tinge. The account will no doubt show that the targetted Object of the manifestive spiritual world is Eternal and identical with the Hero of the speaker. Hasty conclusions will be pouring forth to oppose this by welcoming anthropomorphic and apotheotic thoughts. The delineations will prove that the Object pointed to is beyond the comprehension of crippled senses. And the Absolute Eternity made up of Pure Knowledge and Incessant Bliss is never to be had within the compass of our senses. All objects of the phenomena which are comprehended by senses have temporal situation and deformed entity void of different 'qualities' that are always submissive to senses.

Sree Krishna-Chaitanya's inculcations of the Personality of Godhead cannot be restricted to or accused as Idolatry. Idols are constructed of mundane materials and are subject to the inspection of senses. The Eternal Absolute does not exactly submit to these senses, as He does not put Himself as a shareholder of phenomenal things. Whichever comes under senses has equal value with one of Nature's products and forms to be a subject of the jurisdiction of senses. The Eternal Absolute is inconceivable by limited senses. The partially eclipsed views of the Absolute are shaky, non-absolute, liable to transformation and under the clutch of the span of Time. The physical limitations are all accommodated in Space, Time and particular entities. The naming of the Transcendental Absolute through the lips of a mundane agent will surely seek after a size, a colour, etc., and must undergo the ocular examination. The Transcendental Absolute should in no case submit to our dermal perceptions, neither to our nasal or lingual activities as well.

The Transcendental Sound has got a distinctive denomination from mundane sounds which often tend to submit to the test of other senses. As the Transcendental Sound has not been originated in mundane phenomena, He will not be diffident in showing His true phase whose manifestive realisations are identical with the Name Himself. In that case the essence of such Sound would not permit the different entities of the same Object; as we find in

phenomenal objects tracings of numerical base instead of the integral unit. The differential values are integrated in the Transcendence. So there is indication of One Object by the dinning of the etherial vibrations in different positions. These sounds converge in One Point Who is known as the Absolute. This Absolute is on the Eternal plane of All-Knowledge and Incessant Bliss and can have manifestive Absolute phases with Him. If the various sounds are put into this chaotic plane, there is no reconciliation of a synthetic method. This unharmonising tendency will surely bring a contending and unpleasant atmosphere which we experience everyday.

The uneclipsed phase of the Integral Sound will not in any case bring rupture, but harmonise the contending phase due to the intervention of foreign intrusion. The demarcating lines of comprehending the same thing through the chambers of senses would lead to mundane enjoyment; whereas the ignorance of enjoying things through limited scope would put the enjoyer within the barriers. When the Observer is One, He sees everything and exercises all His Senses for His Own gratification. But the servitors who are fractional entities cannot have any harmonious situation unless all of them have got one aim of being predominated over by the Absolute. The question of relativity does not become a barrier, as we notice such deformities in these phenomena which are subject to Individuality, Space and Time. This situation, solving the difficulties of mundane relativity and Absolute, has been finally settled by the Transcendental unspotted manifestive phase, instead of wrongly inculcating a hallucinative theory of Absolute by negativating the conception of diversities.

The numerical situations of the different entities here have got a relative representation which is certainly condemnable for its undesirability. The glaring desirable features of relativity as delineated in the Transcendence should not be anthropomorphised by our poverty-stricken knowledge and narrow views of phenomenal disorders. In the Absolute Region we find descriptions of mutual Manifestive phases, the Master there being One with millions of servitors of four different classes. We further notice the Absolute as the Eternally Blissful Son of the Entity of Unalloyed Knowledge. The Absolute Friend is the Cynosure of all friendly eyes,

as the Single Object of friendship. He is the Consort of depending consorts and is the Predominating Singular Object of unalloyed love of predominated objects. Whereas, in the mundane plane we find many predominating agents together with predominated sentients. People need not puzzle themselves with the ascription of a motherly idea in the Supreme Absolute, as the seeming features of parents here have got a dignified position which is nothing but a perverted conception of the Real manifestive Absolute. Moreover we find that the parents get the opportunity of serving their only coveted child from His very Birth in different capacities. So the Eternal position of the Master is retained intact from the very Advent of the Child. If we are to accept services from the Lord, Whom we have to render our service, we are simply misled. The Divine Absolute should not be classed as our servitor, as our eternal position is to render our all-time and whole-hearted services to Him alone. A deviation from this will be tampering the very principle of transcendental devotion. The author has wisely delineated these crucial points in the Instructive Life of the Supreme Lord.

The enjoying temperament of this temporal world will find a good jerk in the line of thought of approaching the Transcendence. Sree Krishna-Chaitanya, the greatest world-teacher, has exhibited to his taught the transcendental loving principle of unalloyed souls towards the Absoute All-love where phenomenal dirts could not possibly contaminate the pleasant situation of Manifestive Relativity. The unalloyed devotional exhibition in the Pastimes of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya and His followings are the best and greatest Boon that could be had in the quest of the Absolute. Readers might have noticed one thing in the vital principle of Transcendence of the Desertion of the enjoying mood and the affinity for temporal deformed objects. This abnegation at the very outset will create a puzzling sensation among the youngsters who have embarked on the journey of life to aim after sensuous enjoyment in temporal phenomena. So they may hastily discard the principle of showing diffidence for their much-coveted dream of enjoyment in this world. Sree Krishna-Chaitanya has defined the proper use of the Relief that is offered

by the non-meddling with mundane affairs in an enjoying mood. He has not asked anybody to adopt the indolent processes of non-co-operating with the phenomenal objects. He has rather instructed to practise accepting mundane things when we can trace the connections of the essence of such things with Sree Krishna, the Manifested Fountain-head of the Absolute. His disclosure has set right the topsy-turvy, hodge-podge situation of this apparently chaotic world. He has further cautioned the renouncers not to summarily reject the association of relative things for fear of their proving to be detrimental to alienating the peaceful soul from the mundane troubles by associating themselves with the purposes of the manifested Absolute.

The busy people of this world have decided that the gratification of senses should be the essential aim of all our enterprises here as well as in the next world. So they have deemed it fit to adopt the principle of an ethical religion supplying their wants and to fulfil whatever we are in need of. These triple results are the covetable solutions of the enjoying calibre of sentient entities. This sort of mentality is found in the enjoyers. But there is an opposite section who believes that unless such desiring agencies are stopped, no eternal good can be expected. So they have formulated a different goal for their purpose. These men consider that salvation is required from phenomena by practising a non-co-operative mood from all and even the necessities of life, which tantamount to suicidal commission. By following the high-sounding words of annihilation in the Absolute by dismissing the three respective positions of observer, observation and observed, they covet to be finally rescued from phenomenal troubles.

The Supreme Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya has neither encouraged the enjoying elevationists nor the renouncing salvationists. He has prescribed the pure theistic thought of spiritual devotion to the Personality of All-love by the loving function of the unalloyed souls instead of plunging into the ocean of miseries which offer extreme troubles to elevationists and to persons who, having bitter worldly experience, desire to terminate their animation by the process of annihilation. The Supreme Lord has

thereby settled the question of transmigration. The Semites have, however, adopted a principle, by rejecting the theory of metempsychosis, to dispense with the long extending life of a migratory element. The love of the Absolute can never be attained by men who seek after their aggrandisement or after their liberation. Persons, who entertain the view of their actual freedom from such selfish propensities, can have the privilege of knowing what *Premā* is—which has no bartering system of ‘give and take’ policy. The unalloyed souls are meant to love the All-love with the identification of their eternal loving element. The loving souls are not at all dissatisfied whether the Supreme Lover is inclined to grant their prayer, on the very understanding that their loving connection is inseparable. They at the same time prove themselves to be quite content as their only lover has deemed it fit to discard them and thereby enjoy by the services offered by them. The consideration of exchange has confined the elevationists and salvationists to their respective gains; whereas, no such gain is aimed at by devotees who have thoroughly comprehended their positions of non-traders. This unalloyed love can never be expected in any agents who have got ulterior motives of satisfying their pleasing and enjoying demeanour. Unalloyed service can only be found in *Premā* which has a special characteristic of pure sacrifice without any remuneration in return. No enjoying mood can have any place in that unalloyed function.

The transcendental love should never be compared with the lustful mundane position of an enjoyer. *Premā* reaches its acme in consorthood and the lower stages in filial love, friendship, services and in neutrality. So this Amorous transcendental love has no comparison with other loving affinities.

The cardinal point of this unique progression of love has got a steady infinite dimension of activity which can have no equal in our experience. The Absolute *Premā* is never to be confused with the shaky position of nuptial love of mundane mortal people which tends to have reciprocal interest. But as it has no bearing with deformed relativities, no claim can be asserted to combat with the challengers through arguments.

The historical account connected with the Pastimes of the Absolute need not be mixed with the mundane activities of transformable entities. But the elaboration of transcendental accounts must not be discouraged owing to the bitter experiences we have of our temporal life here. The incidental mentions of history bear a reference of earthly things liable to be perished in time. The essence of history need not be kept at arm's length in consideration of worldly associations which necessitate the existence of components of matter or motion.

Descriptive accounts of history help us in considering the relation between the already acquired knowledge and the welcoming of new thoughts. But in the present case, where we are to deal with a case beyond Nature's phenomena, we should be cautious not to confuse with human frailties and mixing up with temporal defective impressions of mundane relatives. Historicity of things need not be summarily rejected if it renders help to comprehend the direction and nature of the transcendental views. So every branch of knowledge has efficacy to offer us first aid towards our advancement in the Region beyond Nature.

The transcendental sensuous Activities of the Absolute have got transcendental reference and avoid submitting to human senses which are but frail and inadequate. The descriptions of the Transcendental Pastimes of the Absolute need not be confused with metaphorical analogy, strictly confined to our present situation, of acquiring knowledge. Allegories are figments and are treated as innovations of older thoughts in a systematic way in order to place a certain view of things. If they are meant for the purpose of the Transcendent and not for our sensuous gratification, we can accept them for the safety of our transcendental health instead of eliminating even the purpose.

Mental speculations may drag us to some secular purpose which we should avoid for the sake of studying the Absolute Transcendent Who has no contending character to expel the variegated similar manifestations as we often perceive through our senses. So the author has described the Deeds which bear a resemblance to that of history and allegory provided they are not improperly carried to mundane restrictive merits.

History, fiction or poems have worldly values; but when they help us towards the topics of Transcendence we need not have an anthropomorphic disposition. If we bring down the Eternal Pastimes, the Character of the Transcendence is proselytised more or less to our sensuous purpose—a solemn offence which we should not do.

Our intellectual advancement has proved the three different ways of attaining to our different goals: (1) one track is known as fruitive track to propitiate deities to meet and fulfil our demands by physical and mental entities. The dearth of desired objects keeps us at a lower level and we want an amelioration and elevation from the lowest level to the highest summit. In that case we consider ourselves to be actors or perpetrators of our intended actions. When we are actuated by such exciting mood we entertain a definite result which can serve our purpose best. This activity of our physical and mental entities is strictly confined in temporal and inadequate phases. (2) The quest of a different track is insistently urged on our intellectual function when we want to desert the fructifying demeanour of the mind. Desertion from the active life shows us a different track of seeking the Absolute Intelligence by the process of intellectualism. We want to sever our pleasure-seeking aptitude in our passionate desires to destroy all sorts of selfishness accrued in Nature's temporary association. Renunciation from all temporal activities in this plane of deformities offers us a mentality of stupefaction which may be termed as abnegation. In the artificial process of dissociating ourselves from the temporarily meddlings with foreign things which are set apart from our entity, the actor merges himself in the Object pursued, dismissing his active functions. This conglomeration is effected by the synthetic process of grouping together limited things into an accumulative effect; but the accumulation of diametrically opposite elements would never alone yield an opposite element, save in the analogy of enhanced angularities as in the case of two right angles. The neutral position of unalloyed intellectualism would lead us to the result of the extended idea of limitation. Speculative method

of synthetical activities terminates in undifferenced situation of Knower, knowledge and the object of knowledge.

(3) But the advancement would prove that the track of transcendental devotion towards the Absolute is quite free from the summation of the fruitive activities as well as the desertion from having a selfish desire to get a lion's share as a co-sharer. The tracks of elevation and salvation have very little to do in leading to the track of Devotion, as the devotional process has no object of encouraging the fruitive activities in extricating out the Variegated Transcendental Eternal situation. The very process of salvation indicates in time the two different predicaments of the situation which is a bar to the purpose of Eternity. The Devotional process is quite independent of the two systems of fruit-seekers or enjoyers and abnegators or avoiders of self-destructive enjoyment. Readers will no doubt secure the true rationalistic view from the writings of this author. Pure devotional aptitude need not wait for any help from the two other tracks but is quite independent of them. Devotion can only be carried out when the unalloyed position of the soul is determined. Such function should have no component of two other foreign garments which have more or less enshrouded the unalloyed soul in the two planes of association and dissociation with temporal things. The devotional functions of the unalloyed soul need not be observed by placing patches of clouds which are adaptable for the limited plane, eclipsing the true aspects of the true eternal plane of devotion.

The Absolute Knowledge should not bear any reference of deviation and whenever there is the different views we find that the different aspects deprive us of the exact entity of the thing by our polytheistic views of the one thing. The Absolute Truth is ever ready to welcome the different approaches of the atomic parts of the Unalloyed Absolute. But when those atomic parts are mixed up with foreign views they need not be dove-tailed with the Absolute like unalloyed entities associated with the Unalloyed Absolute. The distorted demeanour of the mind cannot approach the Unalloyed Absolute by the easy-going mandate of receiving all sorts of services that may be rendered to the

One; but that One need not have a disfigured entity which is far off His original Beautiful and Sublime Existence. If the Object of our approaching be considered to be contaminated with evil associations inviting our nefarious aptitude of enjoyment, we cannot expect to include ourselves to submit to His Wishes.

First of all, the Object need not be tampered in any way by our whimsical mood and our determination of self need not accompany any anthropomorphic deformities which have no bearing in Him. The different relations we experience in society should be carefully watched in the case of associating ourselves with the Eternal Absolute. We need not carry the defects and unpleasant pains along with us when we trace out our eternal relations with Him. The Absolute Knowledge need not undergo the variegated form of the enjoyable articles, sentient and insentient we meet here. But we are to approach Him with our serving mood for His Eternal Enjoyment. We must not be thinking of eliminating all foreign attributions in us unless we mean to please Him by considering ourselves to be exactly suiting to His purpose which may not be proving to create His annoyance as we experience on this painful plane here. A close reading of the accounts of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya will certainly lead us to the Manifestation of the Absolute in proper order.

If we have a sincere heart to associate ourselves with the Absolute, we must not be considering Him to be our Servitor but we should pose ourselves in the position of a servitor to suit one of His relationships. Our entities will then be different ingredients of the service-holders of the Absolute. But as we are in the habit of securing enjoyments as lords, we have got a quite different determination of self as to lord it over other existences besides our own. In order to set right this awkward taste, we should approach a true serving friend who can regulate our evil propensities which are the bars of the true functions of the unalloyed soul. We cannot make profit by the association of the people who are very busy to culture their wrong habits as enjoyers of this world instead of eliminating the undesirable inculcations of associating with temporal things. The company of non-devotees and the counsels of apathetic disposition towards

the Absolute should by all means be avoided. If we fail to get rid of such intoxicants, we are liable to miss the devotional functions of the unalloyed soul, without making any progress towards the march for our eternal welfare.

The question of occupation has been decided by the Personality of the Supreme Lord in the all-time engagement of all individual souls proper for the Absolute. The occupation of the mind is found to meddle with temporal objects of phenomena; whereas the parts of the body have no other suitable position to fit themselves for limited and temporal purposes. All acts should tend to acquire virtue and happiness. All virtues and happinesses should lead to sacrifice instead of captivating the soul for mundane purposes only. All such dissociating mood with worldly sensuous attainment tends to the occupation of the Absolute and this occupation should be no other function but go to show the interest of the Absolute. The very conception of the external structure and the internal existence, which is also considered as a subtle garment, must not forfeit the interest of the Principal who is known to own these two environments. The interest of the Principal, 'soul', should have no ephemeral acquisition like the consumption of the mind and the body. Altruism may prove to suffice for the higher aims of soul; but such deluding features should not bar the progress of the soul in any way. The body and the mind are shifting agents which, though at present incorporated with the soul, tend to the temporary aggrandisement of the incorporated changeable parts. So attention should be drawn to the interest of the soul proper whose functions should not at all be crippled by the seeming necessities of the mind and the body revolting against the Eternal Blissful Knowledge, *viz.*, the Absolute.

Our all-time occupation need not be confined to the highest reference of mental culture in pure and simple altruism, where the reference of the Absolute along with the reference of our behaviour towards the lower creation is neglected. The inclusion of an indirect service to an Impersonal God or our charitable disposition to some extent towards lower animals by tutored sympathising mentality, is optional and not compulsory.

The Great Absolute should predominate over the crippled forms of infinitesimal absolutes who may appear at the outset as illustrations of non-absolute. If the synthetic process of all isolated entities does not go to One Undeviated Object of the Absolute, it would prove to be a chaotic emporium of unassimilating differences; so our mentalities require rectification to arrange their order in a particular line. One of our friendly co-sharers should come forward to explain before us the nature of the course that should be adopted for our methodic comprehension of the irregularities in one line. This unparalleled mercy of the One Friend and His associates is to regulate the disorderly conduct of the body and the mind. The rhetorical principle of the predominating and predominated functions in their bases of activities could give us the result of one of the four ingredients that follow when we are relieved of the worldly deformed conceptions in the pure spontaneity of a defined nature of eternal relationship that exists between the Absolute and the significatory aspects of the internal parts of the Absolute.

Whenever the specification of the Predominator is prominent, we necessarily find the reciprocal predominated aspects, which may prove to be more than One, as distinguished from the case of the Predominator. The Predominating Agent has a singular significance over the multifarious predominated. This portion of the analysis of the Transcendental Integer has become the most conspicuous explanation offered to mankind by any of the guiding leaders to bring us towards the Transcendence. Earnest readers will no doubt find this unique explanation offered by the writer in the line of instructions received by him from the Transcendental Hero, Whose Career and accounts have been portrayed in this book.

The peculiar feature noticed in men apart from the lower creation is this that the former can exchange thoughts and have the superiority of utilising their experience through the recollections from history and acquired branches of knowledge. They can show their felicitous mood in listening to Scriptures also. So a comparative student can easily demarcate the line of the best and full apart from transitory experiences of this world. The

question of Eternity, Full Knowledge and Bliss cannot be dealt by other agencies of life save man; so man need not neglect the position of the Absolute in the Ever-existence, in Full Knowledge void of all sorts of ignorance and ills that flesh is heir to, and Beatific Constancy of the Fountain-head. The solution of human life should tend towards the approach of the Absolute Who is always courting us to offer His help towards the fulfilment of the inadequate speciality we have in us. And in order to gain an approach we should require the guidance of an individual in whom we can place our reliance, instead of being credulous with the strugglers of this world.

The Supreme Lord has left in this world a band of His followings who are always helpful to mankind instead of deluding the intellectuals to turn themselves idealists and evil-doers with an apparent phase of seekers of their welfare. The author will no doubt be gratified if any of the readers can see his way to scrutinise the Subject of the Transcendence in Whom we are all vitally interested by sparing his valuable time to go through this book.

Before concluding this Foreword, I would like to introduce to the respected readers the aspiring attitude of enlightening his readers on the Transcendental Entity of Sree Krishna as well as His Phase of Instructor in Sree Krishna-Chaitanya in the following points, with references to the context.

(N.B.—All the references are to chapter and verse of the tenth *skandha* of *Srimad Bhāgavatam*).

- Krishna is possessed of an unlimited intellect (84|22).
- Krishna is inaccessible to sensuous knowledge (16|46).
- Krishna is Lord of the infinity of worlds (69|17).
- Krishna wields the power of creating the unlimited (87|28).
- Krishna carries the impress of limitless power (87|14).
- Krishna is possessed of inconceivable potency (10|29).
- Krishna is unborn (59|28, 74|21).
- Krishna solves all heterogeneous views (74|24).
- Krishna is vanquished by exclusive devotion (14|3).
- Krishna is Inner Guide (1|7).

Krishna is the Withholder of the energy of the wicked
(60|19).

Krishna is the Giver of salvation to *jivas* that are free from vanity (86|48).

Krishna ordains the worldly course of conceited *jivas*
(86|48).

Krishna is Primal God (*Deva*) (40|1).

Krishna is Primal Person (*Purusha*) (63|38).

Krishna is overwhelming flood of bliss (83|4).

Krishna possesses fulfilled desire (47|46).

Krishna is self-delighted (60|20).

Krishna is the opponent of the sensuous (60|35).

Krishna is sung by the best of hymns (86|23).

Krishna is the dispeller of the night of pseudo-religion
(14|40).

Krishna is devoid of increase and decrease (48|26).

Krishna is efficient and material cause (10|29).

Krishna is the only Truth (14|23).

Krishna is Awarder of the fruit of work (49|29).

Krishna is not subject to the consequences of work
(84|17).

Krishna is the Seer of cause and effect (38|12).

Krishna is the Person who is time (1|7).

Krishna is Time's Own Self (70|26).

Krishna is even the Time of time (56|27).

Krishna is Present in the heart of every animate entity, like fire inside wood (46|36).

Krishna is Grateful (48|26).

Krishna is the Augmentor (like the Full Moon) of the ocean of earth, gods, twice-born and animals (14|40).

Krishna is the Tormenor of cannibalistic persons
(14|40).

Krishna is the Destroyer of the pride of the arrogant
(60|19).

Krishna is the Root-Cause of the origin, etc., of the world (14|23).

Krishna is the Cause of the world (40|1).

Krishna is the Creator of the world (70|38).

Krishna appears as if possessed of a body like that of mundane entities, for the good of the world (14|55).

Krishna is the *Guru* (centre of gravity) of the world (80|44).

Krishna is the Refuge (*Ashraya*) of *jivas* (individual souls) who are afraid of birth and death (49|12).

Krishna is devoid of birth (46|38).

Krishna is equally the Internal Guide, Cause and Director of *jivas* (87|30).

Krishna is the Destroyer of the miseries of persons who employ themselves in meditating upon Him (58|10).

Krishna is of the fourth dimension and self-manifest (66|38).

Krishna is Worthy of being gifted (74|24).

Krishna is the Punisher of the wicked (69|17).

Krishna is the God of gods (80|44).

Krishna is rarely cognisable by the gods (48|27).

Krishna is unconcerned about body, house, etc. (60|20).

Krishna is the Supreme Ruler of the greatest gods (73|8).

Krishna is the Exponent of Religion (69|40).

Krishna is the Eternal Son of *Nanda* (14|1).

Krishna is Visible to man with great difficulty (71|23).

Krishna's Presence mocks the world of man (70|40).

Krishna is the Object of palatable drink of the human eye (71|33).

Krishna is the Internal Guide of all (31|4).

Krishna is Worthy of the worship of all the worlds (69|15).

Krishna accommodates all the worlds (59|30).

Krishna is the Manifestor of all light (63|34).

Krishna is unstinted in giving Himself away to one who recollects Him (80|11).

Krishna is the efficient Cause (87|50).

Krishna, although devoid of all mundane quality, assumes mundane qualities by His Inconceivable Power for the purposes of creation, etc. (46|40).

Krishna is not subject to change (64|29).

Krishna is not capable of discrimination, by reason of being void of any extraneous covering (87|29).

Krishna is the Giver of Himself to those who covet nothing (86|33).

Krishna loves those who covet nothing (60|14).

Krishna does no work (60|20).

Krishna is Human, Hidden, Primal Person (*Purusha*) (44|13).

Krishna is Present in the hearts of *jivas* like the five elements (82|45).

Krishna is the Supreme Sorcerer (70|37).

Krishna is Supreme Godhead and the Internal Guide of all (56|27).

Krishna is the Crest-jewel of those whose praises are sung by the sacred lore (71|30).

Krishna is Primal Person and Ever-existing (14|23).

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SREE KRISHNA-CHAITANYA MATH,
BRINDABAN, MUTTRA.

CAMP:OFFICE OF THE CIRCUM-
ANULATION OF THE CIRCLE OF
BRAJA, MUTTRA (U.P.)

SIDDHANTA SARASWATI.
24th Nov., 1932.

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

THE Career and teachings of the Supreme Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya have been faithfully recorded by His associates and best beloved servants, *viz.*, the former Achāryyas. But the version of the subject that has been presented by modern writers who base their narrative on the empiric study of the Gauḍiya Vaishnav literature and their experience of the practices of the different hereditary sects of the Gauḍiya Vaishnava Community, presents only the external and necessarily misleading aspect of the transcendental subject. His Divine Grace Paramahansa Pari-brājakāchāryya Shree Shreemad Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswati Goswāmi stands for the strictly transcendental exposition of the Religion of unalloyed devotion of the congregational chant of the Name of Krishna taught and practised by the Supreme Lord, as the Divine Dispensation of the present age. His Divine Grace's editions and commentaries of the original works of the school and numerous other publications embody his transcendental exposition of the universal religion in strict pursuance of the scriptural method followed by all the former Achāryyas.

The present volume is an attempt to convey an idea of certain features of the Transcendental Personality of the Supreme Lord through the medium of the English Language by Professor N. K. Sānyāl, M.A., of the Ravenshaw College of Cuttack. The work has been a labour of love in the strict sense as Professor Sānyāl performed it during the intervals of leisure from the intellectual pre-occupations of his official duties by neglecting the claims of a naturally fragile health. But the book written by him deserves to be placed before the world for the reason that it offers the experience of a Transcendental subject as realised by an empiric scholar and teacher of a recognised standing. Professor Sānyāl is, therefore, well-qualified to meet the requirements of empiric scholars for understanding a transcen-

dental subject. The Publisher hopes that the sterling worth of the volume will be quickly appreciated by all sincere persons as offering a most helpful and reliable introduction to the spiritual literatures of this and other countries, that is essentially different in its point of view and estimation of spiritual values from the fashionable idealistic and materialistic philosophies of to-day. The work has the unique distinction of being recognised by Shrila Paramahansa Goswāmi Mahārāj as containing an exposition of the subject on the true lines.

The Publisher has been working as the preacher of the Gauḍiya Mission in the Madras Presidency during several years and has been encouraged by the keen general interest that has been taken in the activities of the Mission by all sections of the cultured classes. This has led him to undertake the publication of this reliable version of the career of Sree Chaitanya in the English language which will remove a long-felt want and indicate the real relation of the Teachings of the Supreme Lord to all current schools of theological and philosophical thought. All the pecuniary proceeds of the work will be available for the purpose of the Mission for spreading the true knowledge of the principles and practices of the Religion of unalloyed devotion to all corners of the world.

The publication of the volume has been helped by the generous pecuniary aid offered by Rāo Saheb T. Rājagopalā-chāri, B.A., Srotriemdār of Ernavour, Washermanpet, Madras, who has cheerfully borne the entire cost. He has not been content with extending his financial patronage, but has followed the progress of the printing of the work with watchful anxiety, regarding it as his most sacred duty. His child-like simplicity and genuine whole-hearted desire to make the tidings of the eternal religion available in a really intelligible and reliable form suited to the mentality of the present generation have made a great impression on the members of the Mission. May he be enabled to realise the Mercy of Sree Gaursundar by means of this sincere serving disposition.

The Madras Law Journal Press has given every facility to the Publisher in bringing out the volume in the midst of his

missionary activities which entail frequent and long absences from the city of Madras. In spite of the difficulties that were put in the way of the Press by such occurrences and by the fact that it was necessary to revise the matter itself after it had been composed, especially the Introduction and early chapters, the Proprietor of the Madras Law Journal Press did not grudge to give every help towards the early publication of the work. The finish of the work both as regards print and binding has been truly admirable and exceeds even the very high record of this famous establishment. The publisher accordingly takes this opportunity of offering his grateful thanks to the Proprietor and the management of the Madras Law Journal Press for their valuable help in bringing out this exquisitely printed volume within such a short time.

Mr. C. V. Krishnaswami Iyer, B.A., Superintendent in the Secretariat of Fort St. George, Local Self-Government, has given very valuable assistance in going through the proofs, in connection with the revision of the manuscript and in preparing the Index. The sincere thanks of the Publisher are due to this devoted servant of the Lord.

SREE GAUDIYA MATH,
MADRAS,

Jan. 20, 1933.

TRIDANDI-SWAMI,
BHAKTIHRIDAYA BANA.

PREFACE.

THE writer does not intend the book for the Indianists only, nor for any particular sect or group of people. His appeal is to all persons, in every country, of both sexes, young and old including children, for accepting the unique chance of self-acquaintance offered by the living words of the present Most Revered Spiritual Head of Sree Mādhva-Gauḍiya Community, His Divine Grace Paramahansa-paribrājakāchāryya Sree Srimat Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswati Goswāmi Mahārāj. No one can be more alive to the endless imperfections of the book than the unworthy writer. He has only one apology to offer to all his readers, *viz.*, that he was compelled to write by the overpowering necessity of placing his experiences of the Personality and Activities of His Divine Grace and His associated counterparts before the world by way of his humble service, in response to the great and causeless mercy of Sree Guru towards a confirmed rationalist whose case is more or less typical of that of his brethren. It is also for the same reason that the work will be found to embody the method of rational enquiry being committed to the apparently vain attempt of measuring the unlimited by its admittedly incompatible resources. This performance would never have seen the light of the day of actual publication but for the causeless kindness of the Āchāryya who was pleased to accept this unworthy offering and thereby impart the real value to the gropings of irreclaimable egotism.

My only request to the reader is that he or she may not really doubt that the above words are penned by an unrepentant rationalist who has been unable to find for himself the relief that he has the hardihood of declaring to be within the reach of all. In his own case this is, no doubt, the real and unpardonable piece of inconsistency. He is something like a privileged onlooker, by unsolicited permission, of a secondary aspect of the transcendental activities of the group of *bona fide* devotees of the Supreme Lord

Sree Krishna-Chaitanya, who have been unaccountably pleased to appear in the midst of the polemical generation of the present wrangling Age, for making real enlightenment available to all persons who are compelled seriously to seek for the same by the driving pressure of a denying rationalism.

It is the submission of this slight and imperfect narrative that the needed relief is to be sought from the living source who is no other than the Transcendental Agent of Godhead Himself. It is possible for the rational judgment also to be satisfied, so far as such satisfaction is at all possible, if the Office of the Āchāryya is really, even though at first necessarily tentatively, admitted by the establishment of personal communion, by temporary unreserved abeyance of one's assertive judgment, with His Divine Grace, through the enlightening help of His associated counterparts. The narrative seeks to set forth some of the rational grounds in favour of the universal adoption of such course.

As the writer had to stay at a long distance from the publisher and printers by the pressure of his official duties, many small and a few major inaccuracies, for which the writer is responsible, have unfortunately escaped detection. The kind forgiveness of the reader is solicited for these regrettable shortcomings which should be avoidable in a work of this nature.

RAVENSHAW COLLEGE, CUTTACK,

NISIKANTA SANYAL.

November 15, 1932.

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The Author.

SREE KRISHNA CHAITANYA

AUSPICATORY OBSERVANCE

I MAKE my prostrated obeisance to Sree Guru in the two forms of the Guide who imparts enlightenment and those who teach the function of Divine service to prevent lapse into the conditioned state by ensuring progressive advance on the path of devotion. Obeisance to the Devotees of the Lord, to the Supreme Lord Himself, to those eternal Forms in which the Lord manifests His Appearances (Avatāras) on this mundane plane, to His different Manifestations and His Powers! I bow to the Name Krishna-Chaitanya Who is Krishna Himself and all the Divine Categories. Obeisance to Sree Krishna-Chaitanya with Lord Nityānanda Who are like the Sun and the Moon risen in conjunction on the Eastern Hill of Gauḍa! Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya manifested His Appearance in this world in order to give away by His causeless mercy the highest loving service of Himself that had never been bestowed on the conditioned souls of this world prior to His Appearance. May Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya, resplendent with the concentrated hue of beauteous shining gold, manifest Himself in the inmost chamber of the hearts of all persons!

Submission to Sree Hari, Sree Guru and the Vaishnavas is the only condition of attaining to loving devotion to the Feet of Sree Krishna and His devotees. The fulfilment of this condition assures the success of the undertaking by enabling all persons who listen to the Narrative of the Deeds of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya to obtain His mercy in the shape of the highest quality of devotion to the Feet of Sree Rādhā-Krishna.

Sree Krishnadās Kavirāj Goswami in the opening verses of his work on the Deeds of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya has mercifully explained in some detail, for our benefit, the nature, purpose and necessity of the auspiciatory observance as a preliminary for the success of all spiritual undertakings. I can do no better than follow in his footsteps by attempting to explain the significance of the form of the auspiciatory observance.

The auspiciatory observance consists of three parts, *viz.*, (1) the postulation of the subject-matter, (2) benedictory purpose, and (3) offering of submissive obeisance.

The subject-matter of the present work is Sree Krishna-Chaitanya.

Sree Krishna-Chaitanya is identical with Sree Krishna. He is the Final and Absolute Reality. He is Isvara, the Gurus, the Devotees, the Divine Appearances and the Divine Powers. These are the distinctive Divine *Identities*. The undifferentiated *Brahman* of the Upanishads is the glow of His Person. The Oversoul, Who indwells and regulates every entity, is His Portion. *Bhagavān*, Who is full of all Supremacy, all Power, all Glory, all Beauty, all Knowledge and Freedom from every mundane Desire, is Sree Chaitanya. There is no higher Entity than Sree Chaitanya and Sree Krishna.

The Deeds of the Supreme Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya are narrated in this work. His Deeds were made manifest to the view of the people of this world that all conditioned souls may be enabled thereby to attain to the realisation of loving devotion to the Feet of Sree Sree Rādhā-Govinda, which constitutes the highest platform of the service of the Divinity and the knowledge of which had not been divulged to any soul of this world by any former Dispensation. All this will flash to the hearts of all persons who really seek for the Truth, by the causeless mercy of the Son of Sree Sachi Devi wearing the yellow colour of shining gold.

The Deeds of Sree Chaitanya are grounded in His Divinity. The Activity of the *Hṛīdāmi* Potency born of the reciprocal Love of Sree Sree Rādhā Krishna, Who constitute One Personality, brings about differentiation of Divine Body as Couple. The Two Bodies of the Divine Couple re-unite as Chaitanya. The united

Form is Krishna's Ownself clothed with the glow of the Beauty of Sree Rādhikā.

The secondary Purpose of the Appearance of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya in this world found in the Scriptures is what has been stated above, *viz.*, the bestowal of loving devotion to all conditioned souls. But there was another Purpose which is the main cause of His Appearance. It is not explicitly mentioned in the Scriptures but is recognisable as their hidden Import.

The main Purpose of the Appearance of the Supreme Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya is connected with His distinctive Nature that has been indicated. Krishna is anxious to learn how His Divine Counter-Whole, Sree Rādhikā, realises His Own Sweetness and Beauty. In order to have this experience Sree Krishna clothes Himself with the mood of Sree Rādhikā and appears in the Form of an Eternal Union with Her, alongside of and identical with the coupled Form.

This is the inner hidden significance of the Deeds of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya. This distinguishes the *Leelā* of Sree Chaitanya from that of Sree Krishna.

Sree Nityānanda and Sree Advaita are inseparably associated with the Appearance of Sree Chaitanya in this world. It is not possible to realise the nature of the Deeds of Sree Chaitanya without the knowledge of the Personalities of Sree Nityānanda and Sree Advaita.

Through Nityānanda and Advaita the connection of Sree Krishna with the mundane world is established and maintained. This brings us to the question of the transcendental cosmology of the Scriptures. There is a gradation of spheres one above another up to *Goloka*, the Abode of Sree Krishna. In *Goloka* are found Baladeva, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, the "Other Selves" of Krishna. Nityānanda is identical with Baladeva in *Goloka*.

Below *Goloka*, in the realm of the Absolute, is *Vaikuntha*. In *Goloka* Balarāma or Baladeva is the serving Self of Krishna (*Bilās-bigraha*). Baladeva is Krishna in the role of serving His Own Self in various capacities. *Vaikuntha* is the realm of the exclusive Activities of Baladeva. In *Vaikuntha*, accordingly, the fourfold expansion of Sree Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of *Vaikuntha*, the

Manifestation of Baladeva, corresponds to the “Other Selves” of Krishna in *Goloka* with the difference that in *Vaikuntha* the “expansion” (*byuha*) is of the “Other Self” of Krishna or Baladeva Who is delegated the power of expressing his service of Sree Krishna in a realm of his own where His plenary Manifestation, Sree Nārāyana, is served by the method of reverence. Baladeva and his realm of *Vaikuntha* express and serve the Majesty of Sree Krishna. The conception of the service of Sree Baladeva, the Majestic Other Self of Krishna, is the highest that is reached by the help of such imperfect Revelation as is not wholly unacceptable to the empiric instinct, although the practice of this pure form of the reverential service is also very rare in this world. All the revealed Scriptures, with the single exception of the *Bhāgavatam*, are to a more or less extent the text-books of reverential worship. The reverential service of Godhead in its genuine form is wholly free from any mundane grossness, although there is in it a comparative reference of eligibility. The ordinary degenerate practices of the revealed religions are a caricature of the real function which cannot be realised till the soul is released from the fetters of Ne-science.

In *Vaikuntha* there exist positive transcendental activities resulting from the relationships of servants and Master between the individual souls and Godhead. But Godhead is there present in His Majesty and not in His Beauty and Sweetness except in the sense that is compatible with the predominance of His Majesty. The ideal of Heaven and Paradise of the Elevationist religions is a misrepresentation of *Vaikuntha* in terms of mundane felicity. *Vaikuntha* is, however, the goal that is dear to ordinary theistically inclined persons with pure morals. It is substantially inconceivable but is not apparently opposed to the ordinary aspirations and functions of this world, at the first sight.

Next below *Vaikuntha* is the realm of the *Brahman* in which there is no specific spiritual activity neither any form of worldly existence but which is full of a light which has the negative quality of dispelling all worldly ignorance without having power to disclose the specific nature of the transcendental realm. This is the realm of the *Brahman* of the Upanishads, which has been the source and support, as manipulated by Sree Sankarāchārya, of the

empiric worship current in this country that denies the existence of Godhead and substitutes in place of the religion of His service one aiming at complete spiritual annihilation by the process of merging the individual soul in the Divinity. As a matter of fact the realm of the *Brahman* of the Upanishads is not a habitable region at all but a sphere of light which has to be got across to reach the realm from where it proceeds and with which alone the emancipated soul can have anything really to do.

The realm of the *Brahman* is the outer limit of the Absolute world. Between this outer uninhabited zone of the spiritual realm and the highest sphere of this mundane world there flows the stream of the *Birajā* whose water is the causal essence in the nascent form of liquid. This liquid is pure from all mundane quality. A person who bathes in the river prior to entry into the realm of the *Brahman* is freed from all mundane aptitudes.

It is in this stream that there appears the Purusha, Who is the derivative of Balarāma, being a secondary plenary Form of the Divinity. There are three Purushas in the successive order of such secondary derivative manifestation, *viz.*, (1) He, Who lies in the Ocean of the causal water of the *Birajā*, (2) He Who lies in the water of the Ocean of Milk, and (3) He Who lies in the Ocean of the fluid of the Womb of the worlds. It is these Purushas, the secondary extended selves of Baladeva, each being the proximate source of the One next following Him, Who are the Creators and Regulators of the mundane world without being themselves any constituent part, or whole, of the same.

The first of these three Purushas wills the creation of the world and wills to make use of the deluding Potency for the purpose. In respect of the process of material creation He occupies the position that the potter occupies in the making of pots of clay. The potter's wheel, clay and appliances attain their effective existence by another potency of the same Purusha. It is, therefore, the first of the series of the Purushas Who is the source of both the efficient as well as material cause of creation. But in neither capacity He Himself belongs to this world. He does all this work from outside the plane of the limiting energy. Brahmarāma and Siva are connected with the material energy by actual incorporation with her. While Vishnu (the Purusha), although

exercising His function with reference to the material world, is situated wholly beyond all touch with the material energy. The Purushas bear the Name of Vishnu by reason of this transcendental pervading relationship with the mundane world.

As transcendence, in the form of both cause and material of the mundane creation, belongs to the first Purusha, the second Purusha is charged by Him with the function of the collective regulation of the created entities. The third Purusha performs the same function from inside each separate created entity. These two, therefore, are the sources of those spiritual functions that bear some analogy to the imperfect empiric notions, enunciated by Kant and other philosophers of the idealist schools of the West, conveyed by the ill-defined terms, Immanence and Transcendence. These terms of the empiric vocabulary refer to aspects of limited phenomena but the inmanence and transcendence of the third and second Purusha Avatāras of Vishnu are not a *continuum* of the material sheaf which is called phenomenon. There is always the categorical difference of plane between the phenomena and the spiritual transcendent and immanent functions of Vishnu that have a reference to them by way of being their spiritual source.

The functions of Brahmā and Siva are those of creation and destruction. These two great personages belong to this phenomenal world and are in charge of its temporal regulation in a semi-conscious manner. The semi-conscious nature of the ruling functions of Brahmā and Siva makes them the prototypes of the conditioned soul. They are the ideals of personality conceivable by the mind of man, possessed of the super-human powers of creation and destruction of all phenomena. The nature of this power itself is not intelligible to its wielders although they know that they are really endowed with the same by some unknown superior Agency in an unknown manner. There are other "powers" of this class who wield similar but lesser powers over the phenomenal world than Brahmā and Siva. These super-human beings possessed of specific powers over physical nature in different measures, are the highest order of souls in the conditioned state.

The Will of Vishnu in the Forms of the three Purushas is ultimately derived from Nityānanda. The source of the material cause of creation is also Vishnu in the Form of the first Purusha

or Mahā-Vishnu in whom the Material cause and creating Will of the Divinity by reference to this mundane world are incorporated and reconciled.

The word 'A-dvaita' means 'non-duality'. Matter and Will are not categorically different from one another at their source. Neither are they, as regards their source, different from Godhead. But matter as it appears to the conditioned soul as well as the operative will of Godhead as viewed by the same agency, appear to be altogether dissociated from and incompatible with the spiritual essence which is the Nature proper of the Divinity. The solution of this difficulty that besets all speculative enquiry is to be sought in the actual knowledge of the substantive Reality in His graduated Manifestations and not in the hypotheses of inevitable ignorance of fundamental conditions.

The Appearance of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya so far as the Event has a reference to the deliverance of conditioned souls, was effected by the agencies of Nityānanda and Advaita. The functions of Nityānanda and Advaita should, however, be neither over-estimated nor under-estimated as regards Their respective bearings on the Deeds of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya. Those functions are of primary importance to the conditioned soul who, however, need not, therefore, remain confined to the contemplation of these plenary Manifestations of the Divinity. Neither need the conditioned soul suppose himself to be above all help from Advaita and Nityānanda either at the initial or the advanced stages of spiritual endeavour and realisation.

The Real Purpose of the Appearance of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya is not the deliverance of the conditioned souls. The Real Purpose is one that exclusively concerns the Divinity as He is. It is that which was meant when we observed above that the Deeds of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya, as Those of Sree Krishna, are grounded in His Divinity. The Knowledge of those Deeds is identical with the Deeds Themselves. It is for this reason that it is necessary to approach this Narrative with the reverence and confidence that is due to the Person of Godhead Himself. Such reverence and confidence are also necessarily complete. There must be no reservation. The least reservation will lead the hearer or reader of this Narrative to a certain face of the limited energy and

not even to the level of the Purusha Avatāras Who are related to this world without being of it.

But the mercy of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya enables all conditioned souls to pass through all these graded stages of spiritual progress, by appearing to us in the form of this Divine Narrative of His Deeds. This Narrative has been made available by the mercy of Sree Advaita and Sree Nityānanda Who are the eternal Divine Intermediaries between ourselves and the Supreme Lord.

The function of making our prostrated obeisance to Hari, Guru and the Vaishnavas is not an idle or symbolic ceremony. It is exercise of the function of devotion to Godhead made possible by the causeless grace of Sree Advaita who is the source of the material as well as the sanction of all spiritual, functions of us, conditioned souls, under all circumstances. Obeisance to Sree Advaita is obeisance to the Vaishnavas. Obeisance to Nityānanda is obeisance to Sree Guru. Obeisance to Sree Krishna-Chaitanya is obeisance to Godhead Himself as He is. Obeisance to Sree Krishna-Chaitanya is obeisance both to Sree Krishna and His Divine Counter-Whole Sree Rādhikā in One.

The relationship of Sree Rādhikā to Sree Krishna must not be confounded with the mundane sexual relationship between male and female of this world. The service of Sree Rādhikā is not an amorous function in the disruptive specific unwholesome sense of the analogous mundane activity. That supposition, which is due to the mundane import of the term used in describing the Divine Function, may lead the ignorant critic to presume to find the defects of the mundane passion in even the Divine Activity as He is, *i.e.*, in His Fullest and Most Perfect Manifestation. It is, therefore, necessary to implore our readers not to approach the study of this Narrative in such unnecessarily irreverent and superficial temper which will necessarily prevent his regarding the subject from the only genuine point of view, *viz.*, that of the Scriptures. It is only by loyally following the method of submitting to look at the subject unreservedly from the point of view of the Narrative itself that it will be possible for the impartial reader, after he has gone through his self-imposed task with the patience that is due to the right understanding of a subject which is likely to be radically different, at any rate to many of our European readers, from most

current standards in its outlook on and valuation of the activities of this world, to attempt to form a comparative estimate of the view of the Absolute that is presented to him in the following pages.

Vaishnavism stands alone among the revealed Religions of the world in providing a specific account of the Name, Form, Qualities, Activities and the individual personalities of the Servitors of Godhead Himself. The silence of the other Religions on this subject should not be misunderstood as implying the non-existence of any or all specification in the Absolute. There is also no rational ground for supposing that Godhead is unwilling or unable to disclose His Own Specific Self and Divine Paraphernalia to the serving impulse of pure souls.

INTRODUCTORY

I. OBJECT AND METHOD

THE present work is an attempt to offer a theistic account in the English language of the career and teachings of Sree Chaitanya. The number of existing English books on the subject is very small. "The life and precepts of Sree Chaitanya Mahāprabhu" by Thākur Bhaktivinode,¹ the pioneer of the movement of pure devotion in our Age, although it gives a true account of His life, is a comparatively short work. Other English works on the subject are from the pens of self-sufficient misguided amateurs who have had no practical experience of the teaching they have professed to expound. This is opposed to the dictum of Sree Chaitanya that "no one is fit to be a teacher of religion who does not practise the same in his own life". None of these works, with the solitary exception of that by Thākur Bhaktivinode, deals properly with the spiritual side of the teachings of Sree Chaitanya. The available authoritative sources of information are quite exhaustive regarding the spiritual aspect and offer a narrative of His doings and teachings that is both consistent and free from contradictions. To these was added later another body of works of a different character by pedantic pseudo-Vaishnava and faithless foreign writers, that offer the concoctions of their own respective lines of thought. Insincere writers have adopted without apology the point of view and garbled accounts of the pseudo-Vaishnava authors as the basis of their narratives.

The existing English works although they sometimes profess to be historical in reality offer a superficial, extremely crude and misleading view of the subject. They confine themselves almost

¹. Noticed in J.R.A.S., January, 1897, p. 130. The book can be had at the Gauḍīya Math, Calcutta.

exclusively to the exoteric issues. This at least is not the method of the source-books, but a departure from the *bona fide* position of the theme itself. The historical method proper should aim at presenting the religion as it is really found in the genuine original sources and in the spirit of its first propounders. But many of these writers, due to their empirical training, have failed to observe this essential canon of historical judgment. Moreover these writers generally happen to be very poorly equipped in respect of their knowledge of the vast body of Scriptures to which the teachings of Sree Chaitanya stand in the closest relationship; and, even if any of them happen to possess a general acquaintance with the texts of these Scriptures, they fail to take a scientific view of the subject due to lack of spiritual insight.

The prominent defects that mar the value of these works are the purely empiric point of view of their authors, their want of spiritual knowledge of the Scriptures and their lack of critical caution in the choice and use of authorities.

The empiric method is unsuitable for the treatment of a spiritual subject. The vision of the empiricist is confined to things of this world. The Vaishnava authors on whose narratives we have to base our account of Sree Chaitanya, were not empiricists. The subject of which they have left us the account, is the Absolute, as distinct from the empiric, Truth that comes down to them in the chain of disciplic succession from Godhead Himself. They acquired this esoteric vision, when they prove to be true, by the methods of loyal submission and sincere service at the feet of spiritual preceptors as enjoined by the Scriptures on all those who desire to obtain spiritual enlightenment. They are never tired of repeating that the Absolute Truth, inherent in a *bona fide* soul, Who expresses Himself in their books, is not derived from any experience of this world and is not intelligible to those whose vision is obscured by knowledge derived from the experience of this world.

The Absolute Truth is transcendental and, therefore, no human being can attain to Him by his sensuous efforts, *i.e.*, by the ascending process, as all phenomena that are exposed to the faulty, limited senses are, by this virtue, non-transcendental. The Absolute Truth is eternally existent but is not realisable by men so long as

they are not relieved of the aptitude of their defective vision. The Absolute Truth is to be received, undoubtedly in the spirit of honest enquiry, from those wise men who bear no reference to the world of their sensuous gratification.

Very few of the existing English works on Sree Chaitanya satisfy these essential conditions of theistic authorship that are so strongly insisted upon by these devotional writers without which such description carries no useful purpose. On the contrary, these later writers are apt to offer their own views, derived from their empiric association, regarding the subject-matter of the original works, in a manner that leaves on the mind of the reader the impression that they are more anxious to point out the crudities and errors of these old authors than exhibit their views in a scientific and impartial manner. This is certainly neither history nor religion but only an uncalled-for and useless distortion of both.

The object of writing this book is to place before the English-knowing readers a strictly accurate theistic account of Sree Chaitanya, Who teaches the Absolute Truth that has been handed down through the Ages by an unbroken succession of unbiased spiritual preceptors. This narrative is broad-based on all the authoritative sources and seeks to fully present the esoteric side as explaining the exoteric in pursuance of the method of all really enlightened writers on spiritual subjects.

The superiority of Sree Chaitanya to all other teachers and prophets consists in this that He made fully known the Absolute Truth Who was only partially unveiled by others. This is the special significance of Sree Chaitanya's Deeds and Teachings. Other teachers of the religion before him had allowed more or less the worship of non-Godhead, having had reference and adulteration of their present deformities. Sree Chaitanya came into this world to make all people understand that in reference to their eternal existence they should have nothing to do with non-Godhead. Sree Chaitanya, Who speaks the language, is the Absolute Truth in His full manifestation. He has made people understand the only true way of approaching Godhead Himself. This is the proof that He is Godhead Himself. He is identical with Sree Krishna, not His Self as Lord and Proprietor of all things, but in the attitude of the agony of separation from the Absolute, *i.e.*, Himself.

Sree Krishna opposed all addiction to ephemeral thoughts and activities. This has been communicated to us through the channel of unbiased preceptors who have no other interest except delivering in tact the whole of the Truth received by them. The Absolute Truth is sure to be obscured if He is handled by elevationists and salvationists (*karmins* and *jnanins*), *i.e.*, by those who believe in worldly activities and in freedom from misery by means of knowledge gradually gained through the senses. We do not want to learn about the Absolute Truth from these. It is only the pencils of ray emanating from the Sun when they happen to be received by the retina that enable one to see the Sun directly even from a long distance. But we must be very careful that nothing foreign interposes between the eye and the Sun, thus obstructing the passage of the ray and preventing it from reaching the eye. This is the epistemology of Absolute Knowledge offered by Sree Chaitanya. It is followed in the brochure of Thākur Bhaktivinode referred to above. My object is only to elaborate what is told briefly in that little book and elaborated in the *Bhāgavatam* and *Charitāmrīta*.

The peculiarity of my position, therefore, consists in this that I shake off the views of the schools of mundane elevationists and salvationists, the professors of temporary enjoyments (*bhukti*) and permanent release from misery attendant upon such enjoyment losing in the process the idea of the individual self itself (*mukti*), for the reason that they do not lead to the Absolute Truth. We are absolutists. We believe that our only duty is to follow the Absolute Who has His Own eternal plane to stand. We hold that the most intelligent among the contemporaries of Sree Chaitanya, those who sincerely followed Him, really understood His teaching through serving love. This truth which they received from Sree Chaitanya Himself has been communicated to my Preceptor by a succession of sincere followers of the Absolute Truth reaching back to them. Each one of this succession of preceptors submitted to the conditions of sincere pupilage to his predecessors enabling the latter to impart to him the Truth by the eradication of temporary, local errors and misconceptions that might crop up in unguided critics. Due to this careful transmission of the full Truth through unbiased preceptors to my unprejudiced Preceptor

I should rightly claim him to be a contemporary of Sree Gaur-sundar Himself. Other lines of teachers who deviate from my Preceptor are Absolutists only to an extent. Had they been fully absolutist they would have come under the banner of the line of Absolute Truth, which has no affinity of deviating from the Absolute proper. My Preceptor out of his unlimited mercy, which I craved, brought me to his path by himself coming to me and dissuading me from following other ways and means of language that would be intelligible to me in my then condition.

There is thus in my case a direct preceptorial connection extending right up to the living sources undisturbed by physical or mental obstruction. The line of the Absolutists has prevented us from going astray in any other direction but to embrace Absolutism and has given us this careful training. I am a regulated being and do not belong to the empiric school as I keep not any view of deserting this line to join the challengers. My preceptors have been free from mundane references being treaders of the path of the Absolute. We are discussing the Deeds of Sree Chaitanya in the light of our preceptors. But our preceptors did not tell us this thing in the present form and language. Linguistically it is our maiden effort. We do not know whether we shall succeed in this. We, however, claim to have received this narrative from the living sources. Only the strict followers of Sree Chaitanya can obtain the full view of the Absolute Truth. It cannot be had by the followers of any other teacher who has a different angle of vision. All other lines only offer a partial view. Sree Rādhā-Govinda, the full Truth, is attainable only on this path. I should be a sincere follower of my preceptor and of the preceptors of my preceptor and have no intention of deviating from my preceptors. There is no chance of foreign element getting into my account. There is no hypocrisy. The only thing that is new is that I am trying to tell it through the medium of a different diction and language, which happen to be different from those of my preceptors.

In this connection it will not be out of place to refer to subtle and unconscious prejudices that stand in the way of our giving a real hearing to a purely spiritual subject. The life and teachings of Sree Chaitanya are not the special concern of any narrow sect.

The knowledge of it is claimed to be indispensable for the whole animate and inert world in as much as Sree Chaitanya is the living embodiment of the highest and the most intimate distinctive forms of the service of the Supreme Lord to which every being has a claim by his constituent principle. The service of Godhead, however, has no affinity with anything of this transitory world as in the case of meddling with non-God conception. The readers of the transcendental Deeds (*Lelā*) of Sree Chaitanya may be divided into three classes, *viz.*, (1) those who read for the satisfaction of idle curiosity, (2) those who read for gathering empiric knowledge to suit their taste and to mould the same accordingly, and (3) lastly, those readers who are really seekers of the Absolute Truth as distinct from the empirical, *i.e.*, who sincerely avail themselves of the full opportunity of their reading.

We need not stop to consider the case of that class of readers—the dilettantes and mere literateurs—who read for the satisfaction of idle curiosity.

Those readers who will approach the subject in a real spirit of enquiry may take up one of two possible attitudes. Some of these may consider the subject as one that is capable of being understood in the light of worldly experience like any non-spiritual subject. Such persons will accept only those portions of this work which may appear to them to agree with their existing convictions. But as these convictions, in the case of empiricists, happen to be themselves based on the experience of this world, which is changeable, they are in their nature only relative, and not absolute, Truth. Those convictions are in fact unspiritual and, instead of helping, prevent us from understanding the Absolute. Those readers who, failing to grasp this real difference between the spiritual and the physical and mental, may try to understand the subject with the help of their empiric knowledge, are bound to be dissatisfied as they proceed with this study, and the net result of their labour in going through these pages may be even to confirm them more strongly in their empiric, *i.e.*, unspiritual, attitude. The object of study in such case will be entirely missed.

That class of sincere readers who, recognising the difference between the empiric and the spiritual Truth, are inclined to seek for the latter only in these pages and may be prepared for the pur-

pose to disregard, at least for the time being, the clamorous opposition of their empiric convictions, and are thus in a position to give the narrative a patient and sympathetic hearing, will be thereby enabled to understand gradually the reason why the most sincerely religious people happen to cherish the subject of this work with such tender and absorbing devotion.

It is not possible to enter into the spirit of a subject unless a really patient hearing is given to it. But it is very difficult to submit with patience to listen to a subject that is declared to be situated completely beyond the scope of all experience and convictions of the hearer. The ordeal that faces us on the threshold of spiritual life is truly formidable. It is only such people who combine openness of mind with a sincere desire to know not the empiric, changeable, relative, but the Absolute, unchangeable, eternal Truth, that are enabled by the grace of Godhead to listen patiently to a spiritual narrative which appears to be almost needless from the point of view of the empiricist.

The transcendental career and teachings of Sree Chaitanya are bound to prove to be of the highest interest to all sincere seekers of spiritual enlightenment. The fact that Sree Chaitanya appears to be born in Bengal need not mislead those readers who belong to a different country into supposing that His teachings are meant for the people of Bengal or of India, of this or of a former Age. It is difficult for most to free their minds completely from national, ethnological or chronological prejudices in these days of militant nationalism and empiricism. But the real meaning of the career of Sree Chaitanya will be missed if He be regarded merely from any mundane point of view, *viz.*, that of race or nationality; limited time or limited space; physical bearing; intellectual endowment, caste, creed or colour, etc. His teaching and activities belong to the plane of the Absolute which transcends all the petty unwholesome limitations of our worldly existence. Let the sympathetic reader lay aside these subtle and unconscious prejudices and allow the eternal Truth to enter the mind thus opened out to Him, without hastily passing the final judgment by a mere cursory look at the title page. Whatever the quarter from which the Absolute Truth enters His appearance and, in this matter His choice is free, the Absolute Truth when He actually knocks at

our door should be assured the unreserved welcome that is His due from those who really seek for Him.

The sincere reader need also be on his guard against specific misconceptions at the very outset, of an unfavourable kind. The Deeds and Teachings of Sree Chaitanya have been consciously or unconsciously misrepresented by most modern writers. We have already referred to this fact. Any idea, favourable or unfavourable, regarding Sree Chaitanya that the reader may have already formed from the writings of these authors or their partisans may be temporarily laid aside to allow of an impartial hearing being given to the present narrative. Dogmatism, superstition or self-sufficiency can never lead to spiritual progress. Our readers are much more likely to gain what they require if they do not reserve any contrary thought which is likely to receive these tidings coldly or prevent them from taking up a sympathetic and enquiring attitude. The advice is to stop temporarily any conception that they may have already formed and even to dismantle any awkward construction that may lie across the path of their following the course of the narrative with seriousness of purpose.

The message of the transcendental realm that has come down to this phenomenal world through the medium of sound is known as the *Veda* (*i.e.*, knowledge), or as the *Sruti* (*i.e.*, that which is heard), as the ear alone of all the organs of sense is fit to receive the distant message which is transmissible only in the form of sound. The Absolute Truth, for the simple reason that He happens to be located beyond the reach of our physical senses, cannot be directly perceived by us. All the other senses, *viz.*, those of touch, sight, smell, taste require, as the condition of perceiving any object, actual contact with the same. But the ear possesses this special peculiarity that it can perceive an object in subtle form without being in gross material contact with it. As for example it is possible to hear about London from Calcutta by means of the ear. It is not possible to learn anything about London from Calcutta, in the same natural way, by means of any other sense. The Scriptures, *i.e.*, writings, are but the visualized revealed transcendental sounds. Therefore it is not so extraordi-

nary as it seems at first sight that of all our present organs the ear alone should be privileged to receive the message of the Absolute. The transcendental sound is, however, different from ordinary sound inasmuch as it is identical with the object denoted by it, while the object denoted by the latter is different as object from the sound which is a symbol to signify the object without itself being the object.

The identity of the transcendental sound with the object denoted by such sound is due to the fact that everything on the transcendental plane happens to be an entity of incomprehensible infinite dimensions. This is not submitted to the present limited understanding of man which is strictly limited to entities of three dimensions only. The transcendental Truth possesses unity and is infinite by His Nature. All this is contrary to our limited reason and so accustomed we are to the rationale of limited experience that it appears to us to be *therefore* irrational. Unless this really irrational opposition of our finite reason is temporarily stopped it will effectively bar all access to the real infinite. But once the voice of Godhead is allowed really to enter our attentive ear He will purify our perverted reason and render it fit to appreciate that which in its present degraded state it is unfit to understand. Let us, therefore, assume for the present that unwholesome heterogeneity is not possible in the Absolute Who is altogether unitary in His character.

The rational necessity of revelation for our knowledge of the Absolute should be perfectly clear. The alternative to this are the multifarious spurious theories regarding the Absolute that have been put forward from time to time by the human mind. These man-made theories are, and can be, neither conclusive in themselves nor in agreement with one another. They are liable to constant modification with the progress of empiric knowledge. These wrong theories can never lead us to the Absolute Truth Who admits no such self-contradiction as is inevitable with empiricists. The word of Godhead as revealed in the *Veda*, i.e., by means of the recorded transcendental sound, has been, and will ever remain, the only rationally possible source of all human knowledge regarding the substantive nature of the unchallengeable Reality.

There is thus nothing irrational *ab initio* in holding that the *Veda* is the Word of Godhead Himself. The *Veda* exists from eternity. The *Veda*, according to His own version, was originally revealed in this world to Sree Brahmā, the first *jīva* to appear in the realm of physical Nature, and by him made available to other *jivas*, that have since made their appearance in this world in course of time, through the channel of disciplic spiritual succession.

The *Veda* contains the Absolute Truth Whose service is the eternal and universal function of the proper nature of all entities. Not being made by any one the *Veda* is free from all taint of narrowness, error or partiality. The path to which He points is the only one that should be trod by every soul if he wants to walk in the way of Truth. It is necessary to put off all prejudices against the authority of the revealed Scriptures arising out of misapprehension of the nature of the subject. The admission of the supreme authority of the *Veda* does not involve the utter annihilation of thinking. On the contrary it is the Absolute Truth Who enables us to find the real value of empiric thought and its relation to ourselves. Nor does the acceptance of the *Veda* involve the rejection of the Scriptures of other countries. The revealed portions of all the Scriptures are one and the same. They are the Word of Godhead differing only in the degree of manifestation. This oneness of all revelation will become clearer in course of this narrative.

The *Veda* is self-existent and eternal. It was not made by anybody. It has the quality of attracting to itself the devoted homage of all sincere souls. Men of this world love a thing by reason of its worldly benefits for themselves. There is nothing in the shape of worldly value to explain the acceptance of the *Veda* by the most sincere seekers of the Truth. It is as if one is irresistibly attracted towards a chance passer-by and welcomes him into one's house by a spontaneous instinct. No extraneous circumstance, no previously found ties, would explain this spontaneous liking. It must be entirely due to some innate excellence in the object of such attachment. The *Veda* has ever been loved *in this impartial and detached attitude*. Theories that are made can mislead inasmuch as they attempt to substitute the convic-

tions of their authors in place of those of others. It is the substitution of one untruth in place of another, due to the vanity or spite of clever or aggressive thinkers. There is no room for impartiality in such case. The Absolute Truth alone is really impartial. His impartiality is the cause of the acceptance of His service by sincere souls.

The Absolute Truth Who finds implicit expression in the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*, has been put into a systematic and more explicit form in the *Brahmasutra* of Sree Vyasaadeva. In this remarkable work the subject has been treated under the four heads of (1) relationship of everything with Godhead, (2) solution of apparent heterogeneity that is found in Nature, (3) the means of spiritual realisation, and (4) the object of spiritual function. The *Brahmasutra* establishes the existence of personal Godhead, and devotion as the means of realising transcendental love for Godhead as the final object of such activity.

The Authority of the *Brahmasutra*, as part and parcel of the revealed Scriptures, is admitted by all transcendentalists. The chain of disciplic succession in the case of Sree Vyasaadeva is as follows. Sree Vyasaadeva received the Word from Sree Nārada who received it from Sree Brahmā, the first god representing the bound creation, to whom it was communicated by Sree Nārāyana Himself, i.e., Personality of Godhead as He exists in *Sree Vai-kuntha*, the realm that is free from all limitation.

The *Brahmasutra* gives us the Truth in a highly condensed form. It is the text-book of all theistic philosophy. The conclusions embodied in it and their significance have been elaborated in a number of commentaries written by different authors.

Sree Vyasaadeva is also the author of the *Srimad Bhāgavatam* which gives us the comprehensive history of the transcendental activities of Godhead Himself and of His different Avatāras. The deeds of Sree Krishna Who is declared by the Veda to be Godhead Himself, as He is, constitute the central theme of this great work. The *Srimad Bhāgavatam* thus forms, as it were, the natural commentary, in the concrete or explicit form, of the *Brahmasutra*, from the pen of their common author.

The Deeds of Sree Chaitanya, the Subject of the present work, are the living Embodiment of the teaching of *Srimad Bhā-*

garvatam. The Deeds and Teachings of Sree Chaitanya stand alone as history of the service of the Supreme Lord in the form of the deepest and perfectly unreserved intimacy.

The privilege of this form of service, the hidden truth of all Scriptures, was never before given to the fallen *jīva*. In the words of Sree Rupa Goswami Prabhu, the authority on the esoteric significance of the Deeds of Sree Chaitanya, "God Himself with the beautiful golden complexion out of mercy appeared in this world in this most degenerate Age to confer the grace of devotion to Himself, of the superior order that had not been given to this world before." Even the *Gectā* which teaches the service of Godhead with single-minded devotion and in the spirit of complete self-surrender, does not tell us much about the actual, concrete form of the highest service. The *Srimad Bhāgavatam* describes all different kinds of service in the concrete form and establishes the supreme excellence of that which was practised by the transcendental milk-maids of Braja. Sree Chaitanya is the living Embodiment of this highest and most intimate form of the service of the Divinity.

The Brindāvana pastimes of Sree Krishna, which have been given the place of honour in the greatest devotional work of the whole world, are of all forms of Divine service the one that is also liable to be most grossly misunderstood. The subject will be treated in greater detail in its proper place in the body of this work. It will suffice for our purpose here to state that Sree Chaitanya made clearly manifest by His Deeds and Teachings what this form of service really means. His Deeds are in fact the *Brahmasutra*, *Gectā* and the *Srimad Bhāgavatam* displayed to our view in the living form. He is the living Vedānta. Other Avatāras and prophets have taught the reverential worship of the Supreme Lord. Sree Chaitanya proved by His Deeds that the highest form of service is to be found in the *Srimad Bhāgavatam*, that its inner meaning had not been properly understood up to His time by anybody and that it offers what all the Scriptures have been endeavouring from eternity unsuccessfully to express. Sree Chaitanya's own career is the concrete living expression of this highest form of the service of the Lord.

The Deeds and Teachings of Sree Chaitanya offer everything that is contained in the whole body of the Scriptures of this country or of any country. They give us the complete view of the Absolute, which is not to be found in any Scripture. And because it is the full view of the Absolute Truth that we get that the Deeds and Teachings of Sree Chaitanya possess the quality of solving all doubts and difficulties. It has the power of delivering from the thraldom of this limited existence the elevationists who base their hope for mankind on worldly activities and also the empiric philosopher who is caught in the cob-web of his own ephemeral speculations. It throws open the gates of the limitless world to all sorts and conditions of people by simply presenting the complete view of the Truth which reconciles all apparent contradictions and composes all the seeming differences and discords that so trouble the material world and, in their place, it establishes the reign of universal spiritual Harmony.

No apology is needed from the historian of the Deeds of Sree Chaitanya for anything in His transcendental career. His Deeds and Teachings, as we find them recorded in the immortal works of His associates and followers, are not the concoctions of the human imagination. Anyone who reads these sublime works with an open mind, is bound to be convinced of the Absolute reality of all those Activities. The task of the historian of Sree Chaitanya is rather not to miss the least detail of His Divine career. This may not appeal to the taste of those historians whose vision is incapable of passing the line of secular interests. But they nevertheless constitute the most momentous facts of theistic history and are, in fact, the goal to which all history leads and in which it should find its supreme fulfilment and real explanation.

The pseudo-Vedāntists are specially liable to under-estimate the significance of the concrete activities of personal Godhead as constituting His fullest manifestation. According to them the Vedānta is a mere theory of the Absolute and is, like any product of mental speculation, an abstract subject; although such view is clearly opposed to that of Sree Vyasadeva himself who would otherwise have not been at so much pains to describe minutely every detail of the Activities of Godhead Himself and of all His Avatāras and assign to the Braja Pastimes of Krishna-Chandra

the place of honour in his comprehensive history of the Divinity. This is the subtle danger that threatens all who put their trust in empiric wisdom. The Deeds of Sree Chaitanya are the practical refutation of all casuistry and empiric speculations regarding the Absolute that are to be found in all parts of the world.

The writer has ventured upon a task that is by its nature super-human not from any pride of empiric knowledge. This task of propagating the eternal religion of all animate beings has been handed down to him in the regular line of spiritual discipleship. It was the wish of Thākur Bhaktivinode to spread the knowledge of the eternal religion taught and practised by Sree Chaitanya to all countries outside Bengal through the medium of the English language. The writer would be failing in his duty towards his spiritual preceptor and towards the growing community of the pure devotees who are desirous that the wish of Thākur Bhaktivinode, the same as that of Sree Chaitanya Himself, should be carried out, if he did not make a sincere effort of putting into the English language information that he has received from his predecessors. The writer feels no misgiving in thus offering to the world at large this message of the Absolute inasmuch as in doing this he is only performing a duty that has devolved on his unworthy shoulders in the regular chain of disciplic succession. He makes his prostrated obeisances at the feet of the preceptor who opened his sealed eyes by the spike of the collyrium of spiritual knowledge and all the devotees of the Supreme Lord that the word of God may through their mercy find expression in these pages.

The Absolute Truth cannot be discovered by the ascending effort of the human mind. Such effort, as a matter of fact, leads to quite the opposite direction. The Absolute Truth has been appropriately compared to the disc of the Sun. It is not possible to find out the Sun during night with the help of the most powerful lamp that can be devised by the ingenuity of man. The Sun can be seen only by means of rays that come from itself. The Sun is visible when it is above the horizon and there is nothing to obstruct our vision directed towards it. The Sun is seen easily enough when these conditions are fulfilled. The Absolute Truth is like the glorious disc of the Sun that is always above the horizon. But we

bound jivas cannot see it as we are led by our empiric knowledge to direct our sealed eyes to the opposite direction and on the mists and clouds of worldliness that further obstruct our view. It is transcendental Truth that is offered in these pages and not any speculations of the writer. This transcendental Truth Whom he has received from his preceptor and Whom he is trying to impart to others is not something that can be challenged by the limited reason of man. His predecessors have been enabled to receive Him by submitting to Him, *i.e.*, by listening to and accepting Him in the sense of practising and preaching the same. This constitutes the sole justification of the present undertaking. The writer is desirous of serving the Absolute Truth by telling Him to others as by doing so he can serve himself and all animate beings in the only really useful way.

This eternal function of the proper selves of all animate beings that has been taught by Sree Chaitanya and all the revealed Scriptures, is at once profound and easy. It is easy because it possesses the quality of satisfying the wants of foolish, senseless and unlettered persons. It is also profound inasmuch as it is capable of benefiting the most erudite scholars, *i.e.*, those who are masters of the art of controversy and most deeply versed in the Scriptures. This combination of apparently opposite qualities is not to be found anywhere else in this world. In fact any one who is free from bias can be heir of this religion; on this *simple* condition it lies open to all mankind. The idealist no less than the practical man of action is equally enabled by its means to successfully cross this great ocean of limited, physical existence. But unthinking worldly-minded people have always been misled by its pervert forms as it has been often misrepresented by the malice, worldly interest or ignorance of its pseudo-preachers. The only way that is open to bound jivas for disentangling themselves from the fetters of ignorance and thereby regaining their natural condition of the spontaneous, spiritual service of the Lord, is that offered by the methods of listening to the transcendental deeds of the Godhead from the lips of His devotees and making the same known to others by obeying the Word of God in their actual conduct and preaching it to others. It is only by constantly listening to the Word of God from those who exclusively serve the Absolute and practising the

same with body, mind and speech that the fallen jivas are enabled gradually to get rid of their materialistic hallucinations which stand in their way of realising their own proper nature and its true relationship with God and therefore of serving Him in the proper manner.

The materials for the present work have been drawn from—
 (1) the *Sikshāstakam* of Sree Chaitanya which gives the summary of His teachings in His own words; (2 and 3) the *Karchās* (memoirs) of Sree Murāri Gupta and of Sree Swarup Dāmodar (the latter as embodied in his works by Sree Raghunāth Dās Goswāmin, Sree Swarup Dāmodar's closest associate); (4) *Prem Vivarta* of Sree Jagadānanda; (5) *Sree-Krishna-Chaitanya-Chandrodaya-Nātaka* of Kavi Karnapur; (6) *Sree-Chaitanya-Charit-Mahākāvya* of Sree Chaitanya Dās, the elder brother of Kavi Karnapur; (7) the works of Sree Prabodhānanda Saraswati; (8) the *Bhajanāmrīta* of Sree Narahari Sarkār Thākur; (9) the numerous works left by five of the famous six Goswāmins; (10) Sree Brindābandās Thākur's *Sree-Chaitanya-Bhāgavat*; (11) Sree Lochandās's *Chaitanya-Mangal*; (12) Sree Krishnadās Kavirāj's *Sree-Chaitanya-Charitāmrīta* and lastly (13) the works of those later writers who have strictly followed the above authors. Most of these works are in Sanskrit, some of them in Bengali.

Sree Chaitanya has not left any books written by Himself. A few shlokas composed by Him are quoted in the works of His associates, the chief of them being the *Sikshāstakam* which gives in eight stanzas a summary of his teachings.

Sree Murāri Gupta was the constant companion of Sree Chaitanya's younger days. His memoirs are a careful record of the activities of Sree Chaitanya at Nabadwip. Sree Swarup Dāmodar attended on the person of Sree Chaitanya night and day throughout the period of His long residence at Puri. His memoirs which have not come down to us in their separate form are the chief authority as regards Sree Chaitanya's latter career and relied upon by all the contemporary writers. Sree Krishnadās Kavirāj Goswāmin in his detailed account of this part of Sree Chaitanya's career made use of the information which he obtained directly from Sree Raghunāthdās Goswāmin who was the spiritual ward of Sree Swarup Dāmodar to whose charge he was committed by the

express command of Sree Chaitanya Himself. Pandit Jagadānanda was the loved playmate of Sree Chaitanya's boyhood and His constant companion to the end. Kavi Karnapur was the son of Sree Sivānanda Sen, one of the closest associates of Sree Chaitanya. Sree Chaitanyadās was the elder brother of Kavi Karnapur. Sree Prabodhānanda Saraswati was the contemporary of Sree Chaitanya. He was a native of Southern India and the younger brother of Sree Venkata Bhatta at whose house at Sree Rangam Sree Chaitanya resided for the period of four months during His travels in the South. Sree Prābodhānanda Saraswati was the uncle and preceptor of Sree Gopāl Bhatta, one of the six Goswāmins. Sree Narahari Sarkār Thākur was one of Sree Chaitanya's principal associates.

Of the six Goswāmins Sree Rupa and his elder brother Sree Sanātana were instructed by Sree Chaitanya Himself in regard to the subject-matter of their respective works. Sree Raghunāthdās Goswāmin got his information from Sree Swarup Dāmodar and he himself associated with Sree Chaitanya. Sree Gopāl Bhatta's connection with Sree Chaitanya has already been mentioned. Sree Jiva was the nephew of Sree Rupa and Sanātana and was the disciple of the former.

Sree Brindābandās Thākur was the recipient of the favour of Sree Nityānanda, the associated facsimile, so to say, of Sree Chaitanya. His mother Sree Narāyani was the niece of Sribāsh Pandit, the foremost of those Vaishnava householders who were the direct followers of Sree Chaitanya. Sree Lochandās got the materials of his work partly from Narahari Sarkār Thākur, one of Sree Chaitanya's close associates and by his devotional impressions. Sree Krishnadās Goswāmin got his information as has already been mentioned from his preceptor Sree Raghunāthdās, one of the six Goswāmins.

Most of the works of the authors named above are still extant and they are the authorities for all subsequent writers. The chief of these later authors whose works have been consulted in the compilation of the present account are, (1) Sree Narottamdās Thākur who was the disciple of Sree Lokanāth Goswāmin, one of the closest associates of Sree Chaitanya, (2) Sree Viswanāth Chakravarty belonging to the line of disciples of Sree Narottamdās Thākur,

(3) Sree Baladev Vidyābhūṣan, the first Gauḍiya commentator of the *Brahmasutra*, (4) Sree Narahari Chakravarty in the line of disciplic descent from Sree Viśwanātha Ṭhākura, (5) Sree Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura, the sincere guardian of the true Vaishnavas of the present day, and (6) my Sree Gurudeva, His Divine Grace Paramahansa Paribrājakāchārya Sree Sreemāt Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswati Goswāmi Mahāraj whose mercy is my only hope of attaining the service of Godhead.

It will be seen from the above that there is no lack of materials of the most reliable character available to the historian of the Career and Teachings of Sree Chaitanya. It is, therefore, rather strange that the personality of Sree Chaitanya has been misunderstood and misrepresented by a certain class of writers. The neglect of the original sources was one cause of this. A constructive motive was supplied by the animosity of sectarians and the greed of worldly interests of pseudo-followers.

It was the life-work of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinode to re-discover the true history of Sree Chaitanya and make the same available to the present generation. The magnitude of this service to his country, to humanity and to all animate beings time alone will show. The eternal religion taught and practised by Sree Chaitanya have been made intelligible to the modern reader by the labours of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinode. It is bound to re-act most powerfully on all existing religious convictions of the world and make possible the establishment of universal spiritual harmony of which the whole world stands so much in need. Most of the works of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinode were, however, written in Bengali and Sanskrit. The present work is a slight attempt to present in the English language an outline of the Life and Teachings of Sree Chaitanya made known by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinode, the pioneer of the movement of pure devotion in the present Age, which aims at re-establishing in practice the eternal religion of all animate beings revealed in the Scriptures and taught and practised by Sree Chaitanya. The activities of my most revered Preceptor are well known to the world. His Divine Grace is commissioned by Godhead to spread the Teaching of Sree Chaitanya to every village of the world and re-establish the spiritual society. This was foretold by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinode.

II. THE REAL NATURE OF SREE KRISHNA

THE historical aspect of Sree Krishna need not be considered as irrelevant or mundane. The Absolute is always no other than Himself. Antiquarian speculations regarding the historicity of of Sree Krishna have thus, inconceivably to us, an intimate bearing on the question of the real Nature of the Absolute. The scheme of ancient History of India that is being worked out by the researches of learned scholars has not yet been conclusively settled in regard to the lay affairs of that remote period which may have witnessed the Great War that is reported to have been fought out on the plains of Kurukshetra between the Kurus and the Pāndavas backed by their respective allies. But the time is not far distant when it will be practicable to avoid prejudices and misunderstandings that at present prevent our approaching that great event in the proper spirit. The Purāṇas are steadily winning the confidence of the most hostile critics and the actual occurrence of the Great War is coming to be recognised, on the authority of the Purāṇas, as having taken place at a period which is not very far from 3000 B.C. The narration of the *Mahābhārata* may now be seriously accepted as providing a tentative basis for the historical career of Sree Krishna. The *Harivamsa*, which forms the supplement of the Great Epic, is not opposed to the *Mahābhārata* either in the spirit or in the so-called assumptions regarding particulars of the career of Sree Krishna that do not appear in the Great Epic.

The difficulty in regard to the Bhāgawatam has also become susceptible of historical handling. If that great Purāṇa was actually composed in the ninth century A.D., as seems not very improbable, it should still be historically possible to accept its testimony regarding even the events of the Boyhood of Krishna. But from the lay point of view, this question is not of absorbing

interest in as much as the politically important activities in the career of Sree Krishna belong to a later period. But from the point of view of religious history, the story of the marvellous Boyhood of Krishna is all-important and demands our most careful consideration.

The *Mahābhārata* deals exclusively with the Doings of Krishna as King of Dwārakā and Ruler of the Yādavas. But the mighty Deeds of Krishna recorded in the *Mahābhārata* form no part of the worship of Sree Sree Rādhā-Govinda, which is the subject-matter of the present work. Bhāndārkār, in his anxiety to redeem the worship of Krishna from the charge of immorality, might prefer the worship of the wedded Husband of Rukmini to that of Sree Sree Rādhā-Krishna. But the *Bhāgavatam* makes the Pastimes of Brindāvana the heart and kernel of the whole narrative of its deeds of Krishna as the Divinity, and it is this which supplies all the materials for the prevalent worship of Sree Sree Rādhā-Govinda. The political Krishna occupies but a secondary position, if even that, in the sphere of worship.

The narrative of the *Bhāgavatam* so far as it covers the same ground as the *Mahābhārata* does not differ materially from the story told by the Epic. But the interpretation and point of view of the *Bhāgavatam* is throughout explicitly different from that of the *Mahābhārata* even in its treatment of those events that are common to the two works. The later date of the appearance of the *Bhāgavatam*, together with the new perspective adopted and the prominence given in it to the Boyhood of Krishna, has given rise to the doubts regarding the authenticity of its story of the Boyhood of Krishna, which is, however, also found in several other Purāṇas of an admittedly more ancient date.

Sectarian manipulation of history is assumed to be responsible for difference of version in the treatment of even historical events that are connected with the origin and growth of creeds. Theologians are supposed to be often ready to be unmindful of any version that may appear to them to be opposed to the tenets of the creed that they happen to profess. The *Bhāgavatam*, judged by this canon, has appeared to certain scholars as being less reliable, in the considered historical sense, than the Great Epic. This view is also supposed to cut at the root of the reality of the

religion itself. The issue regarding religion may be put thus: Did the Pastimes of Krishna at Brindābana manifest themselves on the mundane plane at any period in the ordinary historical sense?

The answer should be, even from the historical point of view, partly, in the affirmative and negative. The *Bhāgavatam* is regarded by the Absolutists as being both a work of the mediaeval period as well as the very Body of the eternally existing Truth Himself. The argument, *viz.*, that as it happens to belong to the mediaeval period it cannot also at the same time be eternal that is without any origin, is inapplicable to the *Bhāgavatam*. The case is exactly the same with the *Brindābana* Pastimes. They are also regarded to be eternally true. They are at the same time claimed to be historically true. But they are not claimed to be merely historical events. They are, therefore, claimed to be as being both old and new, or neither. They are not regarded as limitable by the mundane categories.

It, therefore, becomes necessary to widen the scope of the historical method itself in order to treat such a subject with any principle of consistency. The adherence to the scheme of gradual evolution of the creed has to be got rid of. The test of contemporary evidence as proof of authenticity should be found to be even more misleading for this particular purpose than it always is ordinarily.

What is the reality of the degree of validity of contemporary evidence in the ascertainment of the Truth? I record my opinion regarding a certain phenomenon actually occurring before my very eyes. The statement is made up of the narration of the occurrence and my individual opinion regarding its nature and other particulars that I may suppose have a bearing on it. The narrative portion is separated from opinion by the critics, and is accepted in that unexplained form as historically true. If Krishna actually passed His Divine Boyhood in *Brindābana* and performed at that place all the miracles before the very eyes of all the people, the older narrative of the *Mahābhārata*, it is argued, should have also been cognizant of the same. If those miracles had been the most important of all the Activities of Krishna, Who is the Hero of the *Epic*, they could not have been altogether omitted by the writer

of the Great Epic as they must have been actual and well-known occurrences. Such argument, although legitimate within its due limits in the case of mundane events, does not apply without a good deal of modification to the Pastimes of the Divinity.

It is an option of the servants of Krishna, which they are not loth to exercise, to divulge His Activities, or keep Them concealed from the knowledge even of contemporaries. Those activities possess the special quality of being recognised as true in the real and not merely historical sense, as soon as, and whenever, they are so divulged to the unerring consciousness of the pure individual soul. On the other hand, the reality is impossible of being ever "discovered" by the empiric historical method.

The Absolute chooses to present His deluding face to the sense-perception of man. His deluding energy is all-powerful and is able to prevent the search and discovery of the Truth, for Whose service, however, every individual soul has an imperative necessity. The tentative categories of the mundane Logicians are no other than fetters of the deluding Energy that tend to produce the strange belief that the transitory and limited are necessarily also true. It is this undoubted "fact" that vitiates the current short-sighted "historical" method at its source. The reality of the Ocean is neither proved nor disproved by the admission or denial of the ignorant dweller of the Taklamakan Desert. Such admission or such denial is equally abortive and wide of the mark if the observer has no knowledge of his subject. The issue itself as regards the Truth does not exist for the pedant of the waterless desert of the narrow and closely bariered Hinterland of Empiricism.

What value for instance are we to attach to such "historical" finding as this, *viz.*, that the teaching of Sree Chaitanya was the cause of the political downfall of Orissa? Sree Chaitanya teaches that the Absolute is served by all conditions, beings and events, either consciously or unconsciously as regards the agents themselves. The decline as well as the rise of empires and worlds serves equally in their tiny ways the uncompassable Absolute. *As soon as their relation of service to the Absolute is grasped by the agents, the real consciousness of the Truth is produced in the humble agent.* So long as the Absolute continues

to be pedantically regarded as a part of Physical Nature, as cause or effect, there is no consciousness at all even of the issue itself of the real Truth. Sree Chaitanya and His Activities belong to the plane of the Absolute. The empiric historian, with his geographical and chronological apparatus of observation, can have really no proper idea of the grotesque anomaly that he unconsciously perpetrates by his pedantic effort to gauze the Absolute by the standard supplied to her victim by His deluding Energy in the form of the mundane categories that can only limit and define, whereas the function that is required to be performed is to get rid of the necessity of having to do either.

If *Srimad Bhāgavatam*, which professes to treat of the Absolute, is considered to be an object of this phenomenal world, how can it possibly impart to a person who chooses to entertain such illogical thought, any knowledge of its contents? The recipient of the consciousness of the Absolute as well as the communicant of such consciousness must alike belong to the plane of the Absolute consciousness. The empiric consciousness is not in the plane of the Absolute consciousness at all. It can only bungle and commit a deliberate blunder by attempting to limit and define the immeasurable and undefinable under the plea of a necessity that need not be supposed to exist at all.

It is possible, if the limitations of the mental equipment are fully remembered and allowed for, for a person desirous of treating the subject on the plane of the Absolute to write the cautious narrative of the Activities of Godhead in the limited vocabulary, without falling wholly into the deliberate blunders of dogmatic empiricism. The revealed Scriptures belong to the class of such authentic records regarding the Absolute. They need not be produced at the time of appearance of the events on the mundane plane to be historically acceptable as conveying the direct or first-hand testimony of those occurrences. They are quite independent of the conditions which the mind of the empiric historian finds it impossible to shake off and which make it impossible for him to conceive of the possibility of spiritual occurrences.

Therefore, empiric speculations regarding the so-called "historicity" of a spiritual event instead of establishing its genuineness, only serve to display the utter insufficiency of the empirical

historical method itself for the purpose of the treatment of the history of the Absolute.

For example, the complaint of the empiric scholar, that it is not possible to set forth the nature of the development of spiritual life in India for lack of definite chronology which renders a scientific classification of the original works treating of Indian religion impossible, however plausible in itself it may appear to be at first sight, is, in the light of the foregoing discussion, at once found to be after all only the result of a wholly deluded attitude towards the Absolute Himself. As if the development of spiritual life is capable of being measured by the process of so-called mundane evolution based on the chronological sequence of mundane occurrences!

Our contention is not that the Pastimes of Sree Krishna are historical events but that they are a revelation of the Truth in the form of historical events. The Pastimes of Sree Krishna are not, therefore, less true than any historical events whatsoever. They are much more. All the historical events of this world will be enabled to disclose the real elements of the Truth that they represent only when they would be set forth in their proper relationship to the only eternal Verity, *viz.*, the Pastimes of Krishna. It is the historical events and the canons of historical judgment that require to be brought into tune with the Truth, Who is no other than Krishna. But the empiric historian does the exact opposite of this. He assumes the truth of historical events and his canons of historical judgment as the standard to which the Pastimes of Krishna are to conform for the realisation of any element of the Truth that they may contain!

The whole difficulty is ultimately due to the muddled way of thinking favoured by the empiricists that supposes itself to be self-sufficient for the purpose of finding the Truth. It is empiricism that requires to be made properly conscious of its limitations and to be forced into a serious consideration of the nature of the Truth Whom it professes in and out of season to be so willing to serve. Once the nature of the Truth is taken into our serious consideration, the inconclusiveness of the cult of historicity should be perfectly plain to every impartial thinker. Further anxious consideration of the subject should enable the empiric method to

be limited to its proper scope and by such limited employment to be enabled to serve the quest of the Unlimited.

As soon as the mind is directed to the question of the Nature of the Truth, it is enabled by Truth Himself to understand the otherwise inexplicable postulations of the spiritual Scriptures that it is necessary to obey in order to attain to the plane of the real quest of the Truth. Every circumstance even of this world will then be found to be a help in the realisation of the Truth, and nothing will be found to be a hindrance. The only hindrance, as a matter of fact, is the empiric attitude itself. By the empiric attitude one is led to launch out on the quest of the Absolute Truth with the resources of admittedly utter ignorance. This fool-hardiness must be made to cease. The method of submissive enquiry enjoined by the Scriptures should be substituted after being properly learnt from those who have themselves attained to the right knowledge of the same by the proper method of submission. It is only after one has actually obtained the vision of the Truth, Whose face is so completely hid from the sight of the empiric thinker, that one can, under the guidance of the Truth Himself, set out on the quest of the Truth with any chance of finding Him and proclaiming Him to others.

So, although the method that has been employed throughout this narrative may appear to be inconsistent with the demands of the blind empiric judgment, the reader is requested for the very much more weighty reasons set forth above to lend his listening ear to an attempt to apply the methods of the revealed Scriptures for the purpose of describing the real Nature of Krishna and His Pastimes, in pursuance of the mercy of the authorised Teachers, on the ground that the method is the only one that claims to be applicable to the subject of the Absolute.

As the working knowledge of the Nature of Sree Krishna is the starting point of the search of the Truth, it is my purpose in this chapter to present the reader with a summary of the traditional account of the real Nature of Sree Krishna, which is revealed by the Scriptures of all Ages and countries in more or less explicit forms.

The outline of the history of Sree Krishna as told in the *Bhāgavatam*, which may be accepted as the only authentic account

for our purposes, is as follows. At the close of the cycle known as *Dwāpara* Krishna manifested His Appearance in Bhāratabarsha. He was born at Mathurā. He was the Son of Vasudeva. His mother was Devaki, the sister of King Kamsa of the race of the Bhojas. Apprehending harm to himself from the Issue of Vasudeva and Devaki, Kamsa, that unworthy scion of the Bhojas, had cast the immaculate couple into the royal prison which was most closely guarded. As they passed their days inside the prison of Kamsa six sons were born in succession to Vasudeva and Devaki. All of them were killed in their infancy by the cruel and fearful Kamsa. Sree Balarāma was born as their seventh issue. He was transferred to the keeping of Rohini in Braja as foster-mother, the report being circulated that there had been miscarriage at child-birth. Godhead Himself was the eighth issue of Vasudeva and Devaki. He was conveyed by Vasudeva to the home of Nanda in Braja, whose wife Yasodā had just then given birth to a daughter. Sree Krishna was left to the care of Nanda and Yasodā in Braja and their daughter was brought to Kamsa's prison and exhibited as the eighth issue of Devaki.

Meanwhile Sree Krishna was growing up in Braja in the company of His brother, Rāma. Putanā, an adept in slaughtering infants, was deputed by Kamsa to kill Krishna under the pretence of giving Him suck by the profession of motherly affection. Putanā was killed by the halo of the power of the Infant Krishna. The casuistical demon Trināvarta was slain. The cart for conveyance of their baggages under which Krishna had been put to bed by His parents was smashed by the kicks of the Divine Infant. He showed his mother, by opening His mouth, that the whole world was accommodated therein. He made her see that nescience served to foster love for the power of the Truth. The Infant displayed much juvenile ignorance that was promotive of love for Himself, the True Cognition. Noting the waywardness of her child the matronly milk-maid, embodying the most exquisite degree of serving zeal, bethought of binding Krishna by means of hempen cords; but in vain. But the Incompassable at last submitted to be bound by the exclusive love of the affectionate Mistress of Nanda's home. Krishna broke the twin *Arjuna* trees in course of His childish sports, releasing the sons of a god who had been

reduced to that pitiable condition. Even the gods are liable to lapse into the senseless condition of trees by addiction to evil deeds; and even trees are enabled to regain the spiritual condition by the influence of accidental association with the pure-hearted.

Krishna goes into the forest with His chums for pasturing the calves. There He slays the demon Batsāsur who represents the offences of boyhood. It is now that religious hypocrisy in the form of Bakāsur brought up by Kamsa, is also killed by Krishna of pure understanding. Aghāsur also is slain. He is the embodiment of the principle of cruelty. Thereupon Krishna dined out in the open on the banks of the Yamunā in the company of His chums. The four-faced Brahmā stole the calves and the cowboys. The orderer of the phenomenal world was thereupon deluded by the power of Krishna. By this episode the complete supremacy of the immaculate Sweetness of Sree Krishna over every other principle, was demonstrated. Krishna, the Beloved of the realm of the perfect cognition, is not subject to any regulative restrictions. This also was established. The opulence of Krishna suffers no curtailment even by the total destruction of all spiritual and non-spiritual realms. No one is able to set bounds to the incompassable ocean of the Power of Krishna. The evil-minded Dhenukāsura, the ass of blunt judgment, was destroyed by Baladeva, the principle of the pure individual soul. The serpent Kāliya, the self of crookedness and malice, polluted the waters of the Yamunā, the mellow liquid of the spiritual principle. This wicked demon was thereupon slain by Hari. When the wild forest-fire, the evil of internal faction within the community, burst forth in all its destructive fury, Sree Krishna in Person swallowed it up. Thus the Lord is ever solicitous of the well-being of Braja. Then Rāma killed the demon Pralamba, the thief in disguise who was sent by Kamsa for stealing the children.

And when the sky began to be surcharged with the love-laden clouds heralding the advent of the showery season, the milk-maids of Braja, who are loved by Krishna and are by their nature of a loving disposition, felt intoxicated by singing the Praises of Krishna. They were deeply stirred by the strains of Krishna's flute. They now worshipped Yogamāyā, who effects the union of the individual soul with Krishna, with the desire of gaining

Krishna as their Lover. Those who are possessed of a strong desire to serve Krishna find that there is no adjustment regarding themselves or their relation with others that is necessary for the purpose, of which they need feel ashamed. They are no longer disposed to conceal their minds. Krishna stole away the clothes of those milk-maids at their bath to disclose the perfectly nude state which is the immaculate sporting ground of Divine love. Sree Krishna feeling hungry begged for food that had been prepared for offering at the sacrificial ceremony by the ritualistic Brāhmaṇas. But they did not give it to Him in the pride of their superior status. Those sacrificial Brāhmaṇas were addicted to a variety of empirical interpretations of the Scriptures inspired by the desire of attainment of worldly prosperity or by love for barren speculation which ends in the negation of all specific forms of activity. By dint of their traditional attachment to the Scriptures and the by-gone ancestors they are apt to degenerate into the mere mechanical transmitters of the rules and taboos that are found in the Scriptures. By reason of this vain attitude they are disabled to understand that the attainment of love for Godhead is the only purpose of all those rules and regulations. How can people with such mentality be induced to serve Krishna? But the loyal wives of those sacrificial Brāhmaṇas, despite the opposition of their husbands, repaired to Sree Krishna in the forest and surrendered themselves to the Feet of the Supreme Soul. This demonstrates the truth that neither intellectual nor hereditary equipments are the cause of love for Krishna. It also lays down the right principle of conduct of conditioned souls as consisting in regarding everything with an equal eye. The *varna* and *āshrama* institutions of man are intended for the regulation of the society of this world. If the social order is preserved it affords scope for association with pure-hearted persons and thereby offers opportunities for discussions regarding the supreme desideratum. These tend to spiritual progress. It is the possibility of attainment of love of Krishna by their means that constitutes the value of the institutions of *varna* and *āshrama* (the system of divinely ordained division of social functions and grades). There can, therefore, be no disloyalty to the purpose of the social arrangement if one gives up the observance of the social rules for the sake of Krishna Himself.

self. As a matter of fact, on the actual attainment of the goal itself, the further pursuit of the means of its attainment becomes unnecessary for all persons who are really desirous of obtaining the goal. It is also no infringement of the purpose of the social code to allow such a person full scope for serving Krishna. In enforcing social obligations it is, therefore, necessary to consider the actual condition of individuals to whom they are to apply. Otherwise the very object of social organisation itself will be wholly frustrated.

Hari then forbade the people to perform the sacrifice to Indra. The people were wont to sacrifice to Indra to please him in order that he might send them rain which was necessary for the sustenance of 'themselves and their flocks. This represents the principle of utilitarian work on the basis of mutual co-operation for the safety and well-being of society. Indra, being denied his offerings, in anger tried to punish the denizens of Braja by sending down torrential rain which flooded the fields and homesteads of the people. Hari Himself protected the residents of Gokula from this peril. No harm can come to the servants of Krishna if for the purpose of serving Him even their ordinary domestic and social duties have to be given up altogether which may result in the destruction of the world. No one can kill whom Krishna Himself protects. Even the cosmic law is not binding on them. The devotees of Krishna are free from all observance of all law except that of spiritual love for the Supreme Lord. Through the realm of faith there flows the perennial stream of the holy Yamunā. The transcendental river is the liquid essence of the pure cognitive state. Nanda was in danger of being drowned in the waters of that river of joy, but was mercifully rescued by his Son's blissful Activity. Thereafter Sree Krishna showed the cow-herds His Own Divine Majesty in the realm of the Absolute. The Divine Majesty is always latent in the Personality of Krishna. The Supreme Lord Who is the Beloved of the eternally free souls and their following then performed the Pastime of the Dance in the circle of His beloved. This Pastime manifests the principle of working of Divine love. Lord Hari, out of His mercy, danced in the *Rāsa* circle formed by the milk-maids. He

promoted the growth of their highest love by separation, by His subsequent disappearance.

The stellar system may supply a poor analogy of the *Rāsa* Pastime. Just as the Suns surrounded by their respective circling groups of satellites dance round the Polar Star in the form of a circle, in the same manner, all individual souls eternally enact their harmonious dance in their orbits round Sree Krishna as the centre of the system, sustained therein by the force of Sree Krishna's overpowering attraction for all spiritual entities. In this vast round of the *Rāsa* dance, Sree Krishna is the only Male and all individual souls are females. In the realm of the Absolute Sree Krishna is the sole Master and Enjoyer. All the rest belong to the category of servants and objects of enjoyment that minister to His sole pleasure. The *Rāsa* Pastime is capable of being analogically described in the vocabulary at our command only in terms of the sexual relationship. The reason of this is that there is a real correspondence between the two—the sexual relationship of this world being the unwholesome reflection of the spiritual process in the mirror of this material world. The analogy is, however, bound to prove misleading if due allowance is not made for the radical difference between the substantive nature and location of the two processes. The principle of mundane amour resting on that of physical sex can never be divested of its innate grossness and unwholesomeness. The grossness of worldly enjoyment as well as the sensuousness and frailties of both the object and subject of the sexual passion, are responsible for the imperfections of mundane amour. The *Rāsa* Pastime is absolutely free from any touch of unwholesomeness, all the conditions being favourable for the promotion of the most perfect bliss by universal association in the rites of the most exquisite love. No apprehension of lewdness or sexuality must, therefore, be allowed to stand in the way of the exhaustive consideration of this highest and all-important spiritual subject.

The circular amorous dance or the *Rāsa* Pastime expresses the manifestation of Divine love in its perfectly unobscured form. The highest realisation of this process consists in this, that in it Srimati Rādhikā, the highest object of all reverence of all souls being that supreme blissful Power of Krishna who expresses

His specifically luscious quality, appears in person in the circle of the dancers, in all Her most exquisite charm encompassed by the *bhāvas*, her suite of the most confidential female friends. At the close of the Pastime of the circular dance there follows naturally sporting in the liquid current of the Yamunā, the cognitive essence itself dissolving into liquid bliss on the full manifestation of love.

Nanda who is the personality of spiritual bliss, is swallowed up by the boa-constrictor of the joy of the liberation of merging in the Divine Essence. Krishna, the Protector of His devotees, thereupon rescues him from his peril. The stubborn demon Sankhachūra, who sets fame over every other principle, is then slain in an attempt to create disturbance in Braja. Keshi, the demon of the vanity of political ambition, is next slain by Krishna, the Foe of Kamsa, when the Lord finally made up His mind to return to Mathurā.

Akrura, the contriver of all occurrences, then conducted Hari to Mathurā. On His arrival there, the Lord killed the sturdy wrestlers and then also slew Kamsa himself with his younger brother. On the departure from this world of atheism in the person of Kamsa, Sree Krishna bestowed the charge of the earth on Kamsa's progenitor, Ugrasena, who embodies the principle of independence. The twin widows of Kamsa thereupon repaired to their parent, the King of Magadha, the embodiment of elevationism, and submitted to him their sorrows of the state of widowhood. On receiving this tidings, the King of Magadha set out at the head of his armies and fought seventeen mighty battles about the city of Mathurā, but was every time defeated by Hari. When Jarāsandha at last beleaguered Mathurā for the eighteenth time, Krishna retired to His own Capital of Dwārakāpuri. The real significance of this episode consists in this, that the potency of the principle of elevationism is constituted of the eighteen categories of the ten personal illustrations from birth to death, the four-fold classification according to aptitude and the four-fold division into stages of the individual life (*varnāshrama*). When the seat of knowledge is finally captured by these eighteen categories by fostering renunciation of the world, there is manifested the disappearance of Godhead on the consequent emergence of the longing for pseudo-liberation.

While Krishna abode in Mathurā, He placed Himself under the charge of the teacher of religion, and after completing His study of all the *Shāstras*, restored the life of His preceptor's dead son. There is no necessity in the case of Krishna, Who is naturally perfect, to endeavour for the acquisition of knowledge. The episode indicates that the intellect of man makes progress in erudition during its stage of residence at Mathurā which is the Academy of all learning.

Those who covet the fruits of their activities also cherish attachment to Krishna. Their attachment to the Lord is charged with impurity. The attachment by degrees grows into the well-purified unadulterated liking for Krishna. This salutary truth is manifested in the case of Kubjā's love for Krishna during His sojourn in Mathurā. Uddhava went to Gokula to be acquainted fully with the loving state of Braja which is superior to all forms of devotion.

The *Srutis* affirm that the Pāndavas represent the branch of righteousness, while the Kauravas are the offshoots of unrighteous conduct. For this reason, Sree Krishna is verily the Friend and Preserver of the family of the Pāndavas. In order to establish the well-being of righteousness and for the deliverance of sinners, the Lord deputed Akrura to Hastinā as His messenger.

Jarāsandha, the champion of unwholesome fruitive activity, beleaguered the beautiful city of Mathurā, the abode of the knowledge of the undifferentiated Greatness and Nourishing Quality of the Divinity (*Brahman*). Here the point that is established is that fruitive activity itself is of two kinds. One variety is directed to the supreme desideratum itself. By such activities there is growth of knowledge and by their conjunction liking for Godhead is developed. This conjunction of activity, knowledge and the principle of Divine service, is also variously designated as the process of *karma*, *jnana* or *bhakti*. Those who possess real insight, call it the method of Harmony. But there is a different variety of activity which is directed to a selfish purpose. This form is known as *karma-kānda*, to distinguish it from the process of what is termed *karma-yoga*. This selfish variety of fruitive activity often gives rise to apprehension regarding the existence and attainment of Godhead and promotes their union with atheism

by wedding them with the latter. It is this unwholesome variety of worldly activity that in the person of Jarāsandha invaded the city of Mathurā.

Thereupon, Sree Krishna, of His own accord, conducted His friends, *viz.*, the community of His devotees, to the city of Dwārakā. This is the process of the service of Godhead under the regulative principles of the Divine Dispensation. The Yavana king belonged to a society that was not regulated by the Divinely ordained principle of class and stage (*varnāshrama*). Being thus addicted to ignorant utilitarian activity and relying on the resources of such activity and being thereby opposed also to the path of liberation by empiric knowledge, the Yavana king scornfully kicked king Muchukunda representing aptitude for the path of liberation. The Yavana king was thereupon destroyed by the superior power of king Muchukunda. Hari then repaired to Dwārakā, the seat of the Knowledge of the Divinity in all His Majesty. There the Lord wedded Rukmini Devi, Embodiment of the Supreme Majesty of Godhead. Pradyumna, God of love, was no sooner born from the womb of Rukmini, then he was stolen away by Sambara, embodiment of the deluding Energy. The body of the God of love had formerly been burnt up by Mahādeva, representing barren asceticism. At that period Rati Devi, consort of Kāma, God of love, had sought refuge in the demoniac propensity for the lust of the flesh. Kāmadeva of great prowess, being now instructed by his consort Ratidevi, killed Sambara representing the pleasures of the flesh and made his way to Dwārakā. By way of restoration of the gem, Hari now wedded the auspicious Satyabhāmā, who is part and parcel of Sree Rādhikā, the fulness of the quality of extreme loving sensitiveness. Rukmini with seven other ladies were the reflections of the Power of the most delicious and the very highest Divine love, appearing in the conditions of Splendour and Majesty. They became the chief Queens of the Royal Home of Krishna at Dwārakā. At Dwārakā Sree Krishna's offspring and relations multiplied apace. This points to an essential difference that distinguishes reverential worship rendered to the Majesty of Godhead from that of loving devotion. The former naturally tends to expand by the process of division. The latter is indivisible. It is not possible to deal with this matter in greater

detail at this place. But the subject requires to be most carefully treated in a separate treatise.

A certain demon proclaiming himself to be Vāsudeva preached the doctrine of undifferentiated Monism, at Kāshi, the abode of Hara. The Lord of Romā, Who is Godhead Himself, after slaying that demon, burnt Kāshidhām, the seat of that corrupt opinion. The Lord seated on the back of Garuḍa slew the demon Bhauma who was filled with the notion that the things of this material universe are Godhead. This is idolatry. The worship of the Holy Divine *Archā* is not to be confounded with the worship of idols. The latter consists of the two co-ordinated varieties of pseudo-worship of Nature in its positive and negative aspects. Godhead rescued the victims of idolatry by destroying the faith in the undifferentiated *Brahman* which is the subtle and more dangerous one of the two forms of idolatry and by accepting the worship of their quondam victims. By killing Jarāsandha by the agency of Bheema, the Lord rescued many a king from the bondage of elevationism (worship of pure worldly utility). He accepted unrestricted worship at the sacrifice of Yudhisthira and cut off the head of Shishupāla who was a personal enemy of Himself. At the battle of Kurukshetra, Krishna afforded relief to the Earth groaning under her burden and, having re-established the pure religion, saved spiritual society.

On His arrival at Dwārakā, the sage Nārada was filled with great wonder on beholding the Lord appearing at one and the same time in the homes of all His different Consorts. The fact that Godhead is fully present everywhere and in every soul, is much more wonderful than that He is One and pervades the whole universe by His Divine Essence. The demon Dantavakra, embodiment of barbarism, was slain. The Lord bestowed on Arjuna, His brother by the religion-bond, the hand of His Own sister Subhadrā in marriage. The Lord saved the city of Dwārakā by destroying the efforts of Salwa backed by the knowledge of the deceptive physical sciences. The beautiful products of material sciences are nothing in comparison with the Doings of the Lord. King Nrīga was undergoing the punishment of unrighteous conduct in the form of a reptile. He was delivered from the condition of a reptile by the mercy of the Lord.

Hari ate the raw rice given Him by the Brâhmaṇa Sudāmâ, out of love. The Lord is not so pleased with the offering of even sweatmeats that are made by the *pâshandas* (unbelievers). The monkey Dibida representing un-Godly carnival, was killed by Baladeva embodying the essence of the pure soul full of the love of Krishna. Baladeva performed the Pastime of love in the company of milkmaids who were the different substantive aspects of the pure soul, in a great forest in which there was a city made of the cognitive principle of the pure soul.

These Divine Pastimes are enacted in the hearts of the devotees. They disappear with the termination of the earthly sojourn of the devotees, just as the show ceases on the actor leaving the stage. The Will of Krishna, in the form of Time, having made the Yâdavas, pure spiritual states, desist from their Pastimes, overwhelmed the Divine Abode of Dwârakâ by the waves of the ocean of oblivion. The self-same Will of Krishna, Who is the Source of ceaseless joy, made the devotees give up their bodies, worn out by decay, and by fomenting mutual discord, at Prabhâs, representing the Knowledge of the Divinity. The aptitude towards Krishna that dwells in the hearts of the devotees attains to its pristine glory by its conjunction with the pure soul on his severance from the physical body. It continues its full manifestation in Goloka which is the highest portion of the realm of Vaikuntha.

These Activities of Sree Krishna never cease in Goloka, which is the innermost Sphere of the realm of the Absolute and the Abode of the Supreme Lord in the manifest unobstructed enjoyment of His own pure Nature. They are available to the conditioned soul in terms of the categories of time, space and agent, in proportion to the realisation of his proper spiritual nature. This realisation may remain confined to the detached relationship of the individual soul to the Lord or expand into the form of a social function. It is this latter form that made its appearance in the pure consciousness of Nârada and Vyâsa in the cycle of the Dvâpara Age. The spiritual consciousness is, therefore, susceptible of manifesting its appearance in terms of the activities of individuals and also of those of the community of pure souls. With the growth of the social instinct the second form of manifestation makes its appearance in due course.

Regarded from the point of view of the associated spiritual consciousness Hari is realised as fully manifest in Mathurā, more fully in Dwārakā, and most fully of all in Braja. The degree of purity of its blissfulness, is the measure of the Plenitude of the Divine Manifestation. Judged by this standard, the joyous activities of Braja form the highest platform of the spiritual realisation of the individual soul. In this most blissful experience Krishna is ultimately realisable as the Sweetheart of the spiritual milkmaids, the very highest point in the process being the Blissful Activities of Krishna as the Beloved Consort of Sree Rādhikā.

Those who have been enabled to taste the sweetness of these spiritual realisations, are fully established in the eternal function of the pure soul. It is not possible to elaborate the quality of the liquid sweetness of the process by means of general terms. It is for this reason that the poetic sages have expounded the Truth of the Activities of Krishna by their detailed concrete descriptions. The Supreme bliss is obtainable only by the most solicitous service of Krishna. It is not possible to attain real and abiding satisfaction by the contemplation of Godhead as the Regulator and Companion of the individual soul, or by the realisation of the Greatness of the undifferentiated Divinity by the process of empiric Knowledge, or by worshipping Godhead by the method of the Sacrifice (*yajna*) as the Giver of the fruits of utilitarian activities.

III. THE HIGHEST WORSHIP OF SREE KRISHNA

THE method of the worship of Krishna at Braja is the highest of all forms of worship. The worships that are practised at Mathurā and Dwārakā, respectively, owe their value in augmenting the exquisiteness of the Pastimes of Braja. It is our purpose, therefore, to consider the worship of Braja in some detail at this place. The discussion of the worship of Braja should not be withheld from the cognisance of the conditioned souls, as by means of this alone they can be really benefited. It is only when the conditioned soul is in the position to realise the nature of the mode of worship at Braja that he is freed from the fear of death, by obtaining the life eternal.

The subject of the worship of Braja may be conveniently considered by the related methods of synthetic or positive and analytic or negative treatment. Synthetically regarded the worship resolves itself into a system of relationships divisible in their turn into five distinct grades. These grades are called respectively the tranquilised state, condition of a servant, that of a friend, that of parents and finally that of consorts, in the order of increasing excellence from the point of view of the detached observer.

In Braja certain denizens always regard themselves as the servants of the Prince of Braja. Others consider themselves as His fortunate friends. Sridāma, Subala, etc., possess the pure friendly disposition. Yasodā, Rohini, Nanda are actuated by undiluted parental affection. The consorts, with Sree Rādhikā at their head, regard themselves exclusively as the promoters of Krishna's amorous love in the dancing circle. Nowhere else except in *Brindāvana* can there exist these dispositions of pure exclusive relationships with Krishna. It is for this reason that pure souls feel an instinctive attraction for the charming *Brindāvana*. In *Brindāvana* the Scriptures agree in declaring the amorous disposi-

tion to be the highest of all. By the principle that Godhead happens to be the sole Enjoyer of every entity, the individual soul is proved to be eternally ministrant to the pleasure of Sree Krishna. In Braja, however, there exist no dividing limitations as between Krishna and the serving individual souls like those that separate the master from the servant in this world. On the contrary, there always prevails indivisible supreme bliss in the visible form of these all-loving relationships. The consideration of loving separation also finds a place there for the sole purpose of augmenting still further the happiness of loving union. This blissful disposition, which belongs only to Braja, is realised in its gradual development by the careful preliminary service of relationships that obtain outside Braja in Mathurā and Dwārakā.

The conditioned soul is eligible for service of Godhead only under the strictest regulations. At a subsequent stage, on the appearance of attachment for Krishna, the disposition of Braja gradually manifests itself. At this latter stage Krishna is served internally with loving devotion, but outward regard is displayed towards the regulative social institutions. This duplicity of disposition and practice is known as *Pārakiya* (relationship as to a paramour); because the condition of the devotee resembles that of the wedded wife who may have unfortunately contracted a passion, which is not to be indulged, for a person other than her lawful husband. In these circumstances, the really loyal wife is under the painful necessity, from an innate sense of duty, of showing all outward regard that is due to her husband and of observing scrupulously the domestic and social regulations, although she can no longer feel for them any real internal attachment.

The apparently unintelligible and insincere attachment to society of the highest class of devotees cannot avoid being misunderstood by those comparatively advanced pupils who are in a position to appreciate the beneficent nature of the Scriptural regulations for the promotion of the spiritual well-being of society. But the highest class of devotees do not modify their method out of deference to adverse criticisms even of such *bona fide* objectors. Those novices who are not well advanced on the spiritual path are still less able to understand the ways of loving devotion which actuate the best devotees.

There is a regular gradation in the growing manifestation of the pure spontaneous attachment for Krishna. The growth of such attachment is capable of being divided into three distinct stages in order of increasing excellence, *viz.*, (1) the love of conditioned souls adulterated by endeavour to follow the Scriptural regulations, (2) love for Krishna on the Absolute plane but wanting in the quality of intimacy, and finally (3) perfect love for Krishna free from all extraneous dross. The limit of pure love for Krishna in Sree Rādhikā, the Counter-Whole of Sree Krishna Himself, is termed *mahābhāva* (the loving condition major). Different from the specific nature of *mahābhāva*, but closely approximating the same, there is found the eightfold assemblage of the *bhāvas* inhering in the pure individual souls. They are the eight *Sakhis* (the *Cherami*) of Sree Rādhikā. The *bhāvas* of worshippers adjoining those of the *sakhis*, are the *manjaris* (spray). The worshipper should in the first instance seek the protection of the *manjari* whose *bhāva* corresponds to the worshipper's own nature. He is, thereafter, to offer his submission to the *sakhi* who is served by the *manjari*. If he obtains the mercy of the *sakhi* he will be enabled thereby to attain to the refuge of the feet of Sree Rādhikā. In the circle of the great *Rāsa*-dance the worshippers, *manjari*, *sakhi* and Srimati Rādhikā, occupy positions that are very much analogous to those of the satellite, planet, the sun and the polar star respectively in the mundane stellar system. In the process of augmentation of *bhāva*, the promotion of the enjoyment of Krishna becomes available for *jīvers* who have attained to the quality of *mahābhāva*.

There are eighteen obstacles in the way of this exquisite consummation of *bhāva* which belongs to Braja. These are apt to pollute pure love and give rise to offence. It is imperatively necessary to consider the nature of these obstacles by way of the negative treatment of Braja-*bhāva*, which should supplement and help to prevent any grave misconception of the positive exposition.

The first obstacle is one's encounter with the pseudo-Guru. The bad *Guru* is no other than the demoness *Putanā* who offers the suck of her poisoned breast for killing new-born Krishna in the purified cognition of the soul. Worshippers who have already obtained admission to the path of loving devotion should ponder

on the appearance of *Putanā* in Braja and be thereby enabled to remove the initial obstacle, *viz.*, the bad spiritual guide. The *Guru* is either the inner or outwardly manifested spiritual Guide. The soul in the state of perfect concentration in the absolute *samādhi*, is the *Guru* of the soul. In other words a person who places himself under the guidance of the reasoning faculty and learns from it the method of worship, thereby gives the direction of himself to the pseudo-*Guru*.

The dallyings of the empiric assertive rational faculty with the eternal religion by the offer of her support for its furtherance, are comparable to the artifices of *Putanā*. Worshippers on the path of loving spiritual devotion owe it to themselves to discard all assertive help of reasoning in the attempt to realise the nature of the *summum bonum*, and seek instead the exclusive guidance of spiritual concentration. The human being from whom one learns about the substantive nature of worship of God-head is the outwardly manifested *Guru*. The *bona fide Guru* is the person who after realising the true nature of the endeavour of loving devotion, instructs the submissive disciple (*sishya*) regarding the *summum bonum*, taking into due consideration the specific requirement of the latter. One who presumes to instruct others without himself realising the nature of the course of loving devotion, or who, although himself cognizant of the nature of the path of devotion, instructs the disciple regarding the same without due consideration of the aptitude of the latter, is the pseudo-*Guru*. It is necessary by all means to renounce the guidance of such a *Guru*.

The second obstacle on the path of loving devotion, in the order of appearance, is wrong speculative controversy. In Braja, *i.e.*, on the path of spontaneous love, it is difficult for the proper spiritual state to appear until the demon *Trināvarta*, embodiment of disloyal controversy, has been killed outright. All philosophical speculation, all sceptical arguments of the pseudo-Buddhists and empiric rationalists, are obstructive of the growth of the disposition of Braja, in the manner of the demon *Trināvarta*.

The third obstacle is represented by the laden cart. The injunctions of the Scriptures are apt to be followed in their literal sense without due regard to their meaning. This carrying of the

lumber of Scriptural learning tends to smother the infant Krishna and requires to be smashed with His help at the very outset, if the object of the novice be to realise the state of natural love for Krishna. The mechanical pedant has no access to Braja. The victims of the pseudo-*Guru* are liable to fall into this plight by being prematurely initiated into the process of the state of a female confidante engaged in service as of the *manjari*. Such victims do not realise their misfortune by reason of their mechanical aptitude which is exploited by the pseudo-*Guru* to their utter ruin. Those who follow the advice of such a *Guru* in their worship, quickly fall away from the path of devotion. The amorous mood in such cases can never attain to the depth of the truly spiritual process. But this is never realisable by the parties themselves.

The fourth obstacle "on the path" is termed juvenile offence. Persons who are indifferent to the spiritual guide are thereby rendered subject to the inconsistencies and frailties that beset naughty children. This enemy of the infant Krishna is known as *Batsāsura*. The novice must beware of the guiles of this malicious demon and try to get rid of him at an early stage.

The fifth obstacle makes its appearance on the path of the theists (*Vaishnavas*) in the form of the demon *Baka*. He is an exceedingly cunning fellow embodying the principle of religious hypocrisy. It is this obstacle which is meant by the offence against the Holy Name. Those who, falling into the clutches of the pseudo-*Guru* by neglect of the proper exercise of their judgment, deceive themselves by consenting to adopt the higher grade of worship to which they are not entitled, fall under the category of the third class of offenders described above. But those who, even after becoming aware of their unfitness, persist in practising the higher method of worship, hoping thereby to gain honour and wealth for themselves, commit the offence of religious hypocrisy. Until this defect is discarded, there can be no appearance of the principle of spontaneous liking for Krishna. These hypocrites only deceive the world by the display of the external insignia of sectarianism and pseudo-renunciation. Those persons who choose to show their regard for these arrogant persons in consideration of the external marks exhibited by them, failing to attain the

favour of Krishna, only prove to be thorns in the sides of the people of this world. But it should also be borne in mind in this connection that one should be careful not to allow his caution in regard to the abuse of external signs to betray him into maligning a person wearing the respective external marks of the theistic communities, whose conduct may also embody the inner significance of those symbols. It is, therefore, the constant duty of the *Vaishnavas*, by being neutral as regards external marks, to seek for indications of inner love for Godhead and to associate with and serve the *sādhus* whom they may be fortunate enough to recognize by this test.

The sixth obstacle has the forms of cruelty and violence. This is the demon *Aghāsura*. It is possible for love to suffer gradual decay by the absence of kindness for all animate beings. This must be so inasmuch as kindness can never be a different principle from love for Krishna. There is no substantive difference between love for Krishna and kindness to individual souls.

The seventh obstacle assumes the form of infatuation in the shape of an apparently zealous study of the Vedas (scholarship). Excessive and exclusive attention to the propositions of the diverse polemical schools and their conclusions and modes of argument, tend to lessen the poignancy and clearness of the vision of the truths obtained in the exclusive mood. Even *Brahmā* himself doubted the truth of the real Nature of Krishna by reason of such infatuation.

The eighth obstacle is offered by the demon *Dhenukāsura* in the form of the ass, who tries to prevent the palm fruits, which he is himself unable to taste, from being enjoyed by others. The principles of *Vaishnavism* require for their due appreciation the most penetrating judgment. Persons possessed of a blunted understanding are exposed to this grave plight. The *Vaishnava* religion is indivisible. There is no scope in it for sectarian narrownesses. It is the blunt-headed fool who is liable to misconceive the true nature of the *Vaishnava* community by supposing it to be a sect distinct from other sects of this world. As a matter of fact thick-headed persons are themselves unable to understand the teaching of the spiritual works that have been penned by the former *Āchāryas* of the community and they are also apt to

actively prevent others from having access to those works. This is specially the case with those devotees possessed of a stunted judgment who, being mechanically addicted to the regulations, have no inclination to strive for the attainment of the real status. But the *Vaishnava* religion holds within itself the prospect of infinite progressive advance. Those muddy-headed persons, who choose to remain confined within the literal meaning of the narrow limits of the Scriptural regulations, being thereby led to neglect the unconventional path of spontaneous love for Godhead, soon become indistinguishable from persons who are wedded to the cult of fruitive mundane activities. It is, therefore, never possible to make any progress in the *Vaishnava* religion till *Dhenukāsura* in the form of the ass has been killed.

The ninth obstacle is offered by the conduct of those weak-minded persons who take to the unconventional method of service for the purpose of gratifying their senses which it is not possible to do under the method of regulated service. This is the conduct of the demon *Brishabhāsura*. These persons will be killed by the burning quality of Krishna's personality. The example of such offensive conduct is by no means rare among those hypocrites who make a parade of their religiosity.

The tenth obstacle is offered by the cunning serpent *Kāliya*, representing implacable brutality and treachery, who is apt to pour his deadly poison into the melted souls of the *Vaishnavas* represented by the liquid current of the *Yamunā*. The danger threatened by this fatal poison can be got rid of by the Grace of Krishna.

The eleventh obstacle has the form of intra-communal discord. It is comparable to the wild forest-fire. The disposition bred by narrow sectarianism rendering its victim unable to recognize as *Vaishnava* one who does not assume the external marks of the theistic community, multiplies the obstacles on the path of attainment of the *bona fide Guru* and the actual companionship of the true devotees. It is, therefore, obligatory on all persons to destroy the forest-fire by all means.

The twelfth obstacle on the path of loving devotion is offered by the demon *Pralambāsura* who is prone to commit theft against one's own self. The danger is represented specifically by the

theory of the *Brahman* of the *Māyāvādins* who advocate merging in the *Brahman* as the *summum bonum* and declare the self-realised condition to be one that is absolutely devoid of any distinguishable feature. The system is characterised by the defect of utter absence of the principle of bliss either for the individual soul or for the *Brahman* who is imagined to be perfectly unconcerned about anything. Persistent reflection on those lines gives rise to doubt regarding the very existence of the *Brahman* and produces conviction in the non-existence of the individual soul and the elaborate concoction of a new science to account for the glaring discrepancies of the Āchāryas and proving the utter futility of all human thought and activity. This mode of thinking sometimes finds its way among the *Vaishnavas* and creates a good deal of trouble in the form of an advocacy of self-destruction.

The thirteenth obstacle takes the form of the worship of *Indra* and other lesser *devatās* in the hope of gaining worldly advantages. This prevents the growth of love for Godhead and requires to be avoided with great care.

The offences of theft of another's property and telling of lies are the fourteenth obstacle. These are represented by the demon *Byomāsura*. They stand in the way of one's attaining to perfect love for Krishna and give a good deal of trouble to the novice.

The fifteenth obstacle arises from addiction to intoxicants. In *Braja* the bliss, that is experienced by the individual soul on his being freed from the troubles of mind and body, is termed *Nanda*. There are found persons who betake to the use of intoxicants supposing such habit to be promotive of the above form of bliss. This quickly causes the serious drawback of self-forgetfulness. This predicament is represented by *Nanda*'s sojourn to the abode of *Varuṇa*. This grave offence must be avoided by all means. Those persons who have attained the mode of loving devotion of *Braja* must, on no account, use any form of intoxicant.

The sixteenth obstacle has the form of a proneness to acquisition of fame and honour, and desire for sensuous enjoyment, under the plea of devotion. This is the demon *Shankhachudā*. Those persons who covet fame as the goal of their activities, commit thereby the offence of arrogance. It is necessary for *Vaishnavas* to be very careful about this matter.

The next obstacle is offered by the growing sense of blissfulness that tends to increase by the cultivation of the habit of worship till it assumes the form of self-suppression approximating the state of merging with the Object of worship. This mood for merging with the Divinity is a species of serpent that swallows up *Nanda*. The novice should endeavour to be a *bona fide* servant of Godhead by carefully avoiding this fatal temptation.

The eighteenth obstacle is the demon *Keshi* who has the form of the horse. As the quality of devotion of the novice undergoes swift development, the sense of one's own superiority makes its appearance. If the novice gives a free scope to the speculation regarding his own excellence, it is apt to lead him into the dire offence of disrespect for the Divinity, causing his fall. It is, therefore, necessary that such wicked sentiment may never arise in the heart of the *Vaishnava*. Even after devotion has been fully developed the quality of sincere humility should never be absent from the conduct of the *Vaishnava*. As the contrary of this tends to happen, it becomes necessary for Krishna to kill the demon *Keshi*.

Those who are in the intellectual condition are required to free themselves from those offences which are to be found in the sphere of *Mathurā*. Those who have a taste for fruitive activity must be on their guard against the offences that are noticeable at *Dwārakā*. The devotees should dive completely into love for Sree Krishna by avoiding all those obstacles as they are apt to breed trouble in *Braja*.

The eternal Truth has been made manifest to this world by Sree *Vyāsadeva* in his narrative of the Pastimes of *Braja*. But the real nature of the Truth cannot be realised by means of knowledge born of the senses. The knowledge is spontaneously experienced by the pure essence of the individual soul in his exclusive state (*samādhi*). There are, however, pseudo-exclusive states which must not be confounded with the spiritual condition proper in which there is no presence of any mundane element. In this state the Truth becomes self-manifest by the operation of the spiritual Potency of Divinity. This phenomenal world is the *distorted unwholesome reflection* of the transcendental Realm. It is for this reason that there is a correspondence between the

phenomena of this world and the events of the spiritual plane. The substantive reality in the forms of the Name, Form, Quality, Pastimes and the distinctive personality of His Paraphernalia make their appearance to the soul in his exclusive state (*samādhi*).

It is necessary to keep all doubting speculations at their proper distance, if the clear vision is to be maintained in tact. The least intrusion of such disturbing element blurs and obliterates the spiritual perception. On the gradual subsidence of mundane predilections, the transcendental Truth makes His Appearance by corresponding stages, finally attaining His full concrete manifestation in the Pastimes of Sree Krishna in Sree *Brindāvana*. If the elimination of sensuous speculation is not attended to with scrupulous care, the progress is towards abstraction and absence of distinctive features in such realisation.

If it be our good fortune to attain to the sight of *Brindāvana*, which is full of every object of beauty, we would be in a position, with the fullest assurance of the truth of our realisation, to describe, by means of the admittedly imperfect instrument of mundane vocabulary that we happen to possess for the purpose, the most wonderful and blissful Form of Sree Krishna in Sree *Brindāvana*. Such description should not be supposed to be derived from our experience of this world. It is the outcome of direct perception of the Substantive Reality of Whom the rational phenomena of this world are the distorted unwholesome shadow. No realisation of the substance can be reached by the logical manipulation of confused speculation regarding His shadow whose only function is to mislead to perfection.

The Beauty of Sree Krishna, described by those who have been fortunate enough to realise the vision, is narrated below for the information of the reader; but the meaning of the description cannot be grasped except in the perfect exclusive state which is wholly free from any speculative activity born of the mind.

The Figure of Godhead, fulfilling all requirements of the spiritual principle, is like that of man. His Beauty seems to be represented by the reflected correspondence of the inexpressibly cooling, soft, yellowish, blue that is noticeable in the gem known as "*Indranilamani*" of this world, or is like unto the impression of

the first appearance of the rain-bearing clouds at the close of the season of protracted draught. A certain combination of the triple potency representing respectively the principles of existence, consciousness and bliss, appears to be disposed in an indivisibly oblique manner about the Beauty of Divinity. His Twin Eyes, focussing all the supremely jubilant brightness of the realm of perfect living consciousness, set forth the Beauty of His incomparable Figure. In the material world those Eyes may be found reflected in the beauty of the fresh-blown lotus. On the Head of Godhead's Own Divine Form, there is observed a certain distinctive feature similar to which there is to be found nothing at all in all our previous experience. All that can be said is that the tail of the peacock is probably the reflection in this world of this inexpressible peculiarity. A certain garland of flowers that have the easy perfection of the soul, sets forth the beauty of the incomparable Neck of Sree Krishna. The beauty of the natural flowers of the forest seems to be a reflection of this particular feature. The Waist of Sree Krishna is encompassed by knowledge that is manifested by the spiritual cognitive principle representing the energy of the soul. It seems that the flash of lightning skirting the fringe of a massive assemblage of fresh, rain-bearing clouds, reflects the beauty of the girdle round the Waist of Sree Krishna. The *kaustubha* and other precious gems and ornaments appertaining to the soul disseminate the beauty of the Person of Sree Krishna. The spiritual agency by whose means the ravishing call, that has power to draw the soul, manifests itself, is observed in the figure of a flute. The flutes and other instruments of this world that serve to carry the musical notes of every variety may be the reflection of the Divine Flute. The inconceivable Figure of Sree Krishna is observed to be placed under the *Kadamba* tree, embodying spiritual horripilation, on the grassy woodlands sloping to the water's edge of the *Yamunā* of the liquid spiritual essence. It is by means of these spiritual symbols that the beloved Son of *Nanda*, Sree Krishna, Lord of the spiritual Realm, makes His Appearance to the view of the *Vaishnavas* in their exclusive state (*samādhī*).

But persons who are unfortunately blinded by empiric knowledge are unable to find the Form and distinctive concrete aspects

of the spiritual existence even when the realm of the Absolute is actually brought before their eyes in the exclusive state.

Sree Krishnachandra, in this manner, is realised, in the exclusive state, as maddening the realm of pure souls by the strains of His Flute and attracting the minds of the milkmaids (*gopees*). How may those who are infatuated by the vanities of high lineage, etc., attain to Krishna? Persons who are free from all worldly vanities are alone eligible for being attracted by Krishna. Those who understand the nature of spiritual existence, know that *sādhus* fall into two clearly defined groups, *viz.*, (1) those who have attained to the state of the *gopees*, and (2) those who follow in the footsteps of such self-realised souls. The former are called *siddhas* and the latter *sādhakas*.

The graduated process of spiritual endeavour of those persons who have realised the state of *gopees*, is as follows. In the course of their sojourn in this world, the music of Krishna's Flute enters the ear of a few exceptionally fortunate persons. The sweetness of the music exercising its attraction on such persons makes them fit for the highest spiritual status. This quickly dissipates their male disposition which prompts people of this world to seek for their own sensuous enjoyment. On the complete disappearance of the male disposition there is aroused another temperament characterised by a spontaneous preference for following the guidance of those who are possessed of the mellow quality of spiritual consorthood. In this position the femininity of the soul in the form of capacity for ministering to the enjoyment of Godhead, manifests itself. The expectation of consorthood becomes so strong that the soul under its influence develops all the external symptoms of the state of madness.

The first experience arises in the form of hearing about the specific Figure (*Rupa*) of Krishna. This process falls into two parts. The first of these is of the nature of spontaneous realisation of Krishna's attraction in the sphere of one's ordinary cognitive activity. This event is called the hearing of the music of Krishna's Flute. This is followed by the hankering for listening to the narrative regarding Krishna from those who have had an actual sight. This form of listening to the Scriptural narratives of Krishna from the lips of *sādhus*, also comes under this head.

The realisation of Krishna that is attainable by such hearing and study, forms the division of spiritual endeavour which is called "listening to the Quality of Krishna". The next is seeing the delineation of Krishna as in a picture. This is effected by the realisation of the Purpose and Supreme Skill of Krishna in the design of this material world. He who has been enabled to realise that the material world is the distorted perverted reflection of the realm of the Absolute, is said to have had a sight of Krishna as in a picture. In other words, the preliminary stages of the state of devotion to Vishnu, or *Vaishnavata*, accrues in the three different ways of spontaneous realisation of its desirability, realisation of the nature of Divine worship by the study of the Scriptures and actual personal experience of the Nature of Godhead from a consideration of the wonderful organisation of the material Universe.

Unadulterated faith in Krishna as the source of the loving devotion of *Braja* is the preliminary stage in the gradual appearance of the process of spiritual love. The appearance of this form of unalloyed faith is followed by attainment of close association with the *sādhus*, who are denizens of spiritual *Braja*. Such association is the cause of the attainment of Krishna. Those persons who have the rare fortune of gaining the companionship of *sādhus* in course of their further progress on the path of spiritual endeavour, which is comparable to the stealthy approach of the sweetheart to the secret place of meeting with her lover, may perchance realise, at some rare moment, their auspicious meeting with the Supreme Object of their love on the water's edge of the *Yamunā*, the stream of the liquid essence of the pure soul.

By meeting with Krishna, the transcendental bliss of Divine communion (*parānanda*) ensues which at once causes all worldly felicity previously experienced to appear as infinitesimally trivial in comparison. The supreme bliss grows apace in the heart, as the days pass, towards the most dearly loved ever-new Form of the Soul of all souls. The root of spiritual love is that attachment of the individual soul who is constituted of the principles of pure cognition and bliss, towards the concentrated Divine Form of All-existence, All-cognition and All-bliss, which is perfect in itself and natural for the soul.

This attachment (*rati*) under the favouring impulse of the principle of mellowness (*rasa*) undergoes development by taking on the form of *rasa*.

Rasa is of twelve kinds. The five *rasas* of *sānta* (equanimity), *dāsyā* (service), *sakhya* (friendship), *bātsalya* (parental affection) and *madhura* (consorthood), are the five primary varieties. These five are of the nature of substantive relationship. *Beera* (heroic), *karuna* (tender), *raudra* (keen), *hāsyā* (laughter), *bhayānaka* (terrible), *bibhatsa* (abnormal) and *adbhuta* (wonderful), are the seven secondary *rasas*. These arise spontaneously from the establishment of relationship. Prior to the establishment of actual relationship there is no possibility of external manifestation of attachment. These specific visible manifestations are all secondary *rasas*.

Even after attachment (*rati*) has assumed the form of *rasa* (liquid mellowness), it does not attain to its full resplendence except in combination with the four *sāmagris* (ingredients), viz., (a) *bibhāba* (particular state), (b) *anubhāba* (perception), (c) *sāttvika* (natural indication of emotion), and (d) *byabhichāri* (transitory feeling). (a) *Bibhāba* is of two kinds, viz., (1) *ālambana* (cause), and (2) *uddipana* (aggravating agent). *Ālambana* is again of two kinds, viz., (1) Krishna, and (2) devotee of Krishna. The good qualities and distinctive natures of Krishna and His devotees constitute the division of *uddipana* (i.e., excitant of attachment or *rati*). (b) *Anubhāba* is of three kinds, viz., (1) *alankāra*, (2) *udbhāsvara*, and (3) *vāchika*. *Alankāra*, such as *hār'a*, *bhār'a*, etc., in all twenty in number, has been classified into the three divisions of (1) *angaja* (of the body), (2) *ayatnaja* (spontaneous), and (3) *swabhābaja* (of the individual nature of a person). Sighing, dancing, rolling on the ground and such other activities are called *udbhāsvara*. *Ālāpa*, *bilāpa*, etc., are the twelve *vāchika anubhāvas*. Stupefaction, sweating, etc., are the eight *sāttvika bikāras*. *Nirveda*, etc., are the thirty-three *byabhichāri bhāvus*. The *rasa* and all its ingredients (*sāmagri*) have a constant bearing on the development of *rati* till it reaches the stage of *mahābhāva*.

The attachment (*rati*) for Krishna is *sthāyibhāva* (the permanent state) or the *rasa* (mellow liquid principle) of *bhakti*

(devotion). In conditioned souls the principle manifests itself as *bhakti* or service. In the free state it appears as the principle of love in the realm of the Absolute (*Vaikuntha*). Attachment for Krishna develops up to the stage of *mahābhāva*. The process of development by the methods of identification with primary and secondary *rasas* and by the help of ingredients enriching the variety of its manifestations, constitutes the eternal treasure of the soul in her state of perfect spiritual freedom. It is this which is also the object of endeavour of the conditioned souls. If it be urged that there is no necessity for any attempt to attain that which is eternally inherent in the soul, the answer is that the resuscitation of the eternal principle in the conditioned state is the process of the spiritual endeavours of the conditioned neophyte.

It has been realised in their natural exclusive state by great souls such as Sree Vyasadeva, etc., and also by our Gurus that attachment (*rati*) for Krishna is the most wholesome principle of the realised essence of the *jeeva*-soul. The nature of the substantive reality is in a slight measure manifested in its reflected image. It is for this reason that the principle of attraction between male and female in this world has proved to be the most charming of all mundane entities. But the attachment between male and female of this world is utterly insignificant and condemnable in comparison with the principle of the transcendental reality. This is indicated by the passage in the narrative of the circular dance in the *Bhāgavatam*, "He, who listens to or recites to others, with due reverence and faith, these Pastimes of Vishnu with the damsels of *Braja*, attains to the state of transcendental devotion for Godhead resulting in the simultaneous and speedy disappearance from his heart of the malady of mundane lust". It is, as if, the mirage of the desert is replaced by the shining water of the magnificent lake offering the sorely-needed cooling drink to the thirsty traveller led astray by the deceptive image of the life-giving liquid. I have described the limit of the love and activity of the eternally self-realised souls towards the eternally realised Personality of Sree Krishna. The limit of attachment is *mahābhāva*, the limit of activity is *mahā-rāsa*. This is also the limit of vocabulary sprung from the material principle. That which lies beyond should be seen by means of the exclusive state (*samādhi*).

It is the only thing needful to be imbued with serving love for Sree Krishna, of the perfectly pure kind. It is the nature of genuine serving spiritual love to be absolutely free from all worldly dross. A person, in whom this pure impulse manifests itself, is thereby rendered perfectly pure in every detail of his conduct. Such a person is naturally disinclined to ungodly conduct, all his affinities having undergone a complete change of objective from the mundane to the Absolute. But it is necessary to bear in mind that before concluding any conduct to be blameable, the status of the person displaying such conduct, should be considered. This is the most material point. No conduct is universally good or bad. If the attempt be made to arrive at a uniform body of rules of conduct which are to be binding on all, such a procedure is sure to end in futile speculations and to frustrate all real endeavour for ethical improvement. This is the great disservice that has been done to man by speculative ethics. It has only served to blunt the edge of natural goodness of judgment by entangling it in the meshes of specious theories that are bound to be wholly wide of the mark. It is, therefore, the first and foremost duty of every individual who is sincerely anxious of not being deceived by the shadow, to avoid all barren speculative discussions, on principle.

There is also another pitfall which is avoided by a person who is really inspired by love for the substantive Truth and the desire for serving Him for the sake of promoting His pleasure. Such a person never engages in sectarian hair-splitting. He is found to maintain a discreet attitude towards sectarian disputes and in respect of external symbols which differ in different communities. These issues, as a matter of fact, derive all their value from the purpose which they are instituted to serve. Their external face need, therefore, be neither undervalued nor overestimated. The conduct of the devotee who is actuated by natural love for the service of the Absolute, in these matters, should not, therefore, be misunderstood. Such a person is neither opposed to, nor is he a supporter of, these external features as such.

Those who are servants of Hari know very well that no work is worth doing which does not please Hari; neither is knowledge, by which attachment to Hari is not engendered, of any value. Persons, who are possessed of this truly rational insight, always

engage themselves in activities that are promotive of spiritual progress and desist from every form of activity which has anything else than Hari as its objective. This consideration regulates the minutest detail of the activities of the servants of Hari. They are not deflected from this course by the breadth of an hair in life or in death, so constant is the loyalty of their judgment and so utterly incapable of being overclouded by any extraneous consideration. They are always possessed of unerring judgment, are full of the natural humility of the pure soul and are constantly engaged in doing good to all entities that exist.

They know truly that the soul is the only pure essence, that mind is a product of the principle of inertia and that the gross physical body is a thing of the earth. They are also well aware that the *jīva* (the individual soul) is the eternal servant of God-head whose spiritual function is of the nature of spontaneous liking for the service of Krishna; that he is endowed with the aptitude for his natural function of loving service even while he may be resident in this material world. Possessing the true knowledge of all this, persons, who are endowed with the spiritual disposition that is found on the plane of *Braja*, realising in their souls absolute freedom from all stultifying influences of this phenomenal world, are constantly engaged in the service of Krishna, the concentrated Personal Embodiment of All-existence, All-cognition and All-bliss. This worship is performed spontaneously in the exclusive state proper by the soul disengaged from all mundane affinities.

It is when the impulse of love cannot be compassed by the pure spiritual essence of the soul on account of its triumphant growth that it overflows its natural bounds into the subtle mental body in which it manifests itself in a mixed form. This gives rise to the mental worship consisting of the processes of *manana* (resolution of service), *smarana* (recollection), *dhyana* (meditation), *dhāranā* (retention, assimilation), the thought of *bhutasuddhi* (purification of the material cases), etc. This mental worship need not be avoided on the ground that it is of a mixed nature. This is inevitable till the dissolution of the material cases themselves. But the process that extends to the mind and body from the soul should be distinguished from the apparently similar process reached by mundane sensuous speculation by its ascending

effort. This latter is idolatry proper and is categorically different from the mixed spiritual process.

These mental activities, derived from the soul, on undergoing still further expansion, overflow into the gross physical body. Coming down to the tip of the tongue it expresses itself as utterance of the chant of the Name, Quality, etc., of Godhead. Attaining the proximity of the ear it brings about the hearing of the same. To the eye it imparts the impulse of the vision of the Beauty and Figure of Godhead. The pure spiritual moods of the soul overflow into the bodily expressions of horripilation, shedding of tears, shivering, dancing, prostrations by way of obeisance, rolling on the bare ground, acts of loving embrace, journey to the holy *tirthas* connected with the Doings of Godhead, etc. This overflowing of the spiritual principle into material activity, is inconceivable in its nature and is the manifestation of the causeless mercy of the Divinity intended to bring about the turning of the direction of mundane activity Godward. The institution of honouring of *mahāprasādam* has been ordained by the Scriptures to bring about the change of the activity of indulging in the pleasures of the table in the direction of the service of Godhead. This argument holds also in the case of other spiritual injunctions. This is the true significance of every ritual.

It is not to be supposed that persons who have realised the true nature of the spiritual function, neglect the due performance of worldly activities that are inspired by the mundane purpose. What the perfectly enlightened soul does is this: she maintains internally the attitude of unconditional feminine submissiveness towards Sree Krishna, while displaying the face of a heroic masculinity in her external conduct towards persons and duties of this world. Externally the pure devotee is found to be the most heroic among ambitious workers, a male prepared to exercise all the prerogatives of his superior sex among females, profoundly experienced in dealing with society, a good teacher of boys, the greatest of those who possess the knowledge of our material needs, but is withal skilled in turning them to the account of the *summum bonum*, the peace-maker in war and the purifier of the hearts of sinners. All this is found to co-exist with an opposite disposition, which is the outcome of excessive increase of the impulse of spiritual love,

which leads the devotee to be averse to seeking popularity and to prefer the intimate service of his Beloved in the seclusion of retirement from this world.

The points that are emphatically brought out by the considerations penned above, are that it is not possible to serve Sree Krishna except under the direction, or, what is strictly identical with the same, by association in the service, of pure devotees who alone are in a position to distinguish the chaff from the grain. As soon as the least point of real contact with the pure devotees is established by the causeless grace of the latter, the fortunate recipient of such priceless favour is thereby endowed with the faculty that can distinguish the essential from the non-essential. The pure devotee is always accustomed to overlook all external defects and accept only the inner significance of every occurrence. This, of course, does not mean that one should continue to commit offences in the expectation of such indulgence. The deliberate offender cannot obtain the real mercy of the pure devotee by reason of such offence. It is obligatory to follow the conduct of the perfectly blameless servants of Sree Krishna if one is to realise the nature of their unbounded mercy. If the hand of the observer is placed over his eye it is bound to prevent his receiving the light of the glorious luminary, who is never chary of pouring out, unasked and in unstinted profusion and without the least reservation, his light and warmth towards everything.

Critics who are so unfortunate as to be disposed to stop their ear-holes against the expostulations of self-realised souls and persist in looking at the transcendental, perfectly purifying Pastimes of Sree Krishna through the spectacles of their own malicious sensuous dispositions, are no wiser than the person who does not spare to criticise the Sun and to blame that luminary for withholding his light from one who is determined to keep his hand tightly placed over his eyes. It is necessary to learn how to behave towards the Truth if one is to make His acquaintance at all. Malicious misrepresentations and wilful misunderstandings cannot enable so-called critics to be enlightened about the nature of the Truth nor to enlighten others regarding Him. I desire no other boon than that of being sincerely disposed to make my complete submission to the pure devotees of Sree Krishna for the sole reward of their

approval. I am confident of attaining to the sight of the Truth by following the method which precludes all other desires than that of the causeless and exclusive service of all the servants of the Absolute Truth. May the pure devotees pardon the innumerable lapses of my aspiring attempt to follow in their holy footsteps in all humility.

IV. COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGION

EMPIRIC HISTORY is a narrative of events occurring in time and is, therefore, necessarily limited by ascertained chronology. The ascertainment of the chronological order of events has suggested and supplied the materials for a science of growth or evolution deduced from the chronological sequence of actual occurrences. Attempts have been made to apply the method of chronological evolutionary treatment, in the face of obvious difficulties, to the subject of religion by a growing number of very learned scholars resulting in an apparently surprising degree of unanimity as regards the conclusions reached. It is necessary at the outset of theistic history to attempt a valuation of the speculations with reference to the worship of Sree Sree Rādhā-Krishna to bring them into line with the Absolute Truth. The wide gap that separates the worship of Sree Sree Rādhā-Krishna from the conclusions of empiric religion requires to be explained in a systematic manner in the light of transcendental history which is not limited by any limited chronology to a limited world.

Sree Sree Rādhā-Krishna is the eternally coupled Divine Pair, Sree Rādhā being the predominated, and Sree Krishna the predominating aspect, indissolubly joined together, of the complete, active, Absolute Personality. Rādhā-Krishna or the Absolute is thus a composite of two persons of whom One predominates over the Other. Neither of them is a Person in any exclusive or limited sense. The Personality of the Divinity in either aspect is Absolute and, therefore, also, All-inclusive. The impersonal view gives a partial and, therefore, misleading aspect of the Absolute. Haste-ness of judgment due to inherent defect of understanding is responsible for mistaking the impersonal view as being superior to that of Divine Personality. The Personality of the Absolute should not also, on the other hand, be gratuitously confounded with the

personality of our defective empiric speculations, in which the truth is obscured by the predominance of limiting, delusive, material reservations. Rādhā is not the female of our perceptual or conceptual experience derived from the observations of the phenomenal world by means of defective senses. The Absolute can be neither male nor female of our experience for the simple reason that such male or female can be but one of a number of mutually exclusive entities and cannot, therefore, accommodate the rest of them. It is the intention to avoid this difficulty arising from the defective nature of our sense-experience that has led the empiric philosophers to hit upon the barren and logically untenable notion of impersonality to indicate the nature of the Absolute. This has only landed them in far worse difficulties.

The whole issue hinges on a right understanding of the nature of the Absolute. If God were really a zero we could be saved the trouble of attempting to describe His nature. If God is not zero, He should logically be both everything and no particular thing, at one and the same time. Everything is in Rādhā-Krishna; but Rādhā-Krishna is not identical with anything except Themselves. In other words Rādhā-Krishna has a specific individual existence of Their own, simultaneously with Their external all-pervasive existence. The external entities in their individual aspect, are not constituent parts of Rādhā-Krishna as the Absolute cannot be made up of a number of particulars nor even of the aggregates of individual entities. As a matter of fact individual entities as well as their aggregations are manifestations of Sree Krishna in and by the plenary Divine Power Sree Rādhikā. The manifestations are neither outside, nor identical with their Source.

The question how Sree Rādhikā can accommodate the material universe or other persons partially similar to Herself, occurs naturally enough to the speculative mind whose activities are confined within the limits of three dimensions. But it would be sheer dogmatism and perfectly illogical to try to squeeze the Absolute within the narrow mental scope for the reason that the mind is incapable of conceiving existences of more than three dimensions or of less than one.

There cannot be such a thing as a comparative estimate of different creeds without postulation of a standard of value. It

is, of course, possible to find out the values of the different creeds in terms of one of them. Let us suppose that this is done with every one of the creeds by turn with conscientious impartiality and sound judgment. Will it take us nearer the Absolute? Certainly not. The Absolute could be approached only by means of the Absolute. If none of these creeds be of the nature of the Absolute, the permutation and combination of any number of relative entities can never yield any knowledge of the Absolute. The method that should be applied is that of assigning local values to the fractional parts by relating them to the Integer. Those who adopt the moral principle as the standard by which to judge the local value of a creed, seek to arrange the creeds in an order of moral superiority. As an instance, we may take the methods of Dr. R. G. Bhāndārkar, Barth and their followers. They try to evaluate the worship of Sree Sree Rādhā-Krishna by the moral standard. They consider the worship of Rāma and Sītā as superior being more moral than the worship of Sree Sree Rādhā-Krishna. Such estimations assume the absolute validity of the ill-defined moral standard of empiric thinkers. Those extremely well-informed writers could not have been wholly unaware of this radical philosophical weakness of their standard of value in arriving at any really dependable conclusion in regard to the relative worth of the different creeds.

Idolatry is the proper logical denial of the worship of the Absolute. Idolatry is the result of despair to find out the real truth. When the empiricist finds it impossible to discover the Absolute by means of his abortive speculations, but is anxious to provide a working hypothesis for good conduct, he dresses up his known erroneous idea to do duty as the spurious substitute of the inconceivable Absolute.

The moral principle cannot be clearly defined by those very persons who do not scruple to proclaim it as the only safe test for the valuation of religions. Such a method amounts really to nothing higher than a perverse advocacy of a particular whim. The conclusions thus reached are also never claimed to be unchangeable or absolute. The tentative and inconclusive nature of the performance is held to be part and parcel of the law emanating from the conscious will of a Person possessing the supreme power

and governing the cosmic evolution. This establishes the validity of the principle by shifting the responsibility by way of self-contradiction to the shoulders of the Absolute Himself. The irrational acquiescence of despairing individuals provides its other sanction. As a matter of fact the method which is the fabrication of a particular fallible human mind is confidently offered for the convinced tentative (?) acceptance of all human minds on grounds indicated above. Morality is nothing but an empiric fiction leading to no definite goal. It makes its votary move perpetually in a vicious circle impelled by the desire to discover rational support for the conduct of the average man after performance, on grounds of expediency. Expediency is not, however, the acceptance of, but the refusal to accept, any definable principle of general conduct.

But the aspirations of the physical body and mind refuse to be satisfied even by being allowed a free scope which cannot be realised in practice. The moral philosopher ignores this ugly circumstance and makes a show of sticking heroically to the worship of his idol which cannot save him from constant and irremediable transgressions against itself! If this is not appreciated by the victim, he is charged with the unpardonable crime of pessimism on the ground that it is our moral (?) duty to try to make the best of a bad job. But are we sure that the job is really bad and that it has not been made so by our bungling and hypocritical method of approaching it?

The worship of Sree Sree Rādhā-Krishna is condemned by certain empiric moralists because it seems to them to idolize promiscuous sexuality. But is promiscuous sexuality really undesirable? Is it undesirable for the reason that it is likely to prevent the realisation of the maximum sensual and other pleasures derivable from regulated sexual act? Who is to be the judge? If the attainment of the maximum pleasure by the individual be the desirable object, has promiscuity been really proved to be incompatible with such object? The ethical repugnance to promiscuity after all amounts to nothing more serious than this that it is not in conformity with the *status quo*, and not that it may not be made the *status quo* with proper and reasonable safeguards.

The empiric moral idea is no higher than the above. Lest my monopoly of enjoyment of a particular male or female, whom

I choose to like for the time being, be jeopardized I become an advocate of monogamy (with or without divorce?) and worshipper of Rāma-Sitā. If sexuality is bad, how can even monogamy be good? If promiscuity is bad in itself, how can monogamy be good in itself? By what test is goodness or badness itself to be determined? It has never been possible for aspirations of the flesh endowed with a pseudo-conscious form by the mind to satisfy the genuine demands of our reason.

All speculations of the mind are inconclusive and erroneous. The moral notion is, indeed, only one of those inexplicable entities that demand to be explained. Those who erroneously think that the worship of Sree Sree Rādhā-Krishna is immoral forget that no mental speculation has any access to the Absolute Who is the Object of worship in this case.

What consolation does a mentalist expect by worshipping Rāma-Sitā? Is he, thereby, likely to be encouraged in cultivating his monogamous nuptial relations with assiduity? Can such a conclusion be regarded as logically tenable? If God happens to be monogamous, am I likely to become so, by contemplating His conduct? Can also the very notion of monogamy or marriage apply to the Absolute? We may not want to be promiscuous for absence of unlimited sexual and other powers. It is only a counsel of possible discomfort. Why should we suppose that God's power is limited by any adverse condition? The attempt to judge the Absolute by a limiting standard set up by ourselves for our regulation is opposed to the notion of the Absolute. The Absolute is located beyond the scope of our mental activity. The phenomenal world exposed to the view of our senses is only an abrupt and unintelligible section of the whole Truth. We stand powerless in the presence of the Infinity of Smallness and the Infinity of Greatness that spread at either end beyond this limited span of the visible world and refuse to show themselves to us. This is the tantalising condition of the existence of three dimensions into which we find ourselves securely imprisoned. If any merciful being tries to communicate the tidings of the Absolute to us, he is bound to fail completely unless he is also capable of imparting to us the necessary receptive faculty. This is the position of the Agnostics to a certain extent, as they are conscious of their limita-

tions and are accordingly unprepared to commit themselves to any opinions, favourable or unfavourable, regarding the Absolute. It is a more consistent attitude than the self-sufficiency of Barth or Bhāndārkar.

The Sceptics disbelieve the possibility of the Absolute taking the initiative and communicating Himself to us in a way that is beyond the comprehension of our present limited faculties. The Sceptics, therefore, want to sit still in sheer despair. The Atheists, indeed, speak only the language of delirium when they positively deny the existence of the Absolute. They do not deny the fact of relative existence or relative knowledge. How can they, therefore, consistently refuse to admit the logical necessity of absolute existence and absolute knowledge? Error can have, rationally speaking, no absolute existence and even its seeming existence can only be a reflection of an absolute existence erroneously apprehended by our defective cognitive faculty. Atheism represents at its very best only the crude cogitations of the undeveloped intellect regarding the Inconceivable.

As a matter of fact the worship of Sree Sree Rādhā-Krishna or of Rāma-Sitā, if they are regarded as historical entities located on the mundane plane, is rightly liable to the charge of anthropomorphism. By the mere assertion that a form of such anthropomorphic worship is moral, its absolute nature is only still further ignored. Those who choose unnecessarily to get engrossed in the manipulation of relative speculation regarding the Absolute and declare it as the only method of approach to the Absolute, owe a cautious hearing to any one who does not muddle the real nature of the issue.

Almost the first thing that requires to be settled clearly and at the outset of any so-called historical enquiry regarding religion, is whether the object of our quest is, indeed, the Absolute. Those who are not prepared to admit that religion should be identical with the quest of the Absolute, have an undoubted right of criticizing the conclusions of those who accept the religion of the Absolute. This is what the empiric thinkers have been indefatigable in doing all along. But is it irrelevant to opine that empiric criticism is bound to be altogether wide of the mark in such a case for the reason that the attempt to judge of the Absolute, or

of what is even claimed as the Absolute, is, by the fact of this very reservation, removed wholly outside its self-admitted jurisdiction?

The Absolutists rest their case on the fact that the Absolute can and does communicate Himself by imparting to us the capacity of receiving Him. They go further and assert that we are already eternally endowed by the Absolute with such faculty, but are free to wilfully neglect to make the proper use of the same. That the Absolute is, nevertheless, trying continuously to persuade us to be willing to know Him by making the proper use of those faculties. These are the fundamentals of every religion.

The Absolute is always speaking to us regarding Himself and we are always deliberately shutting our ears to His Voice. The Absolute has been eternally appearing to us in the Form of the Spiritual Scriptures as the testament of His utterances. He is also sending down His agents in the human form to speak to us with the human voice to make the same perceptible even to our sealed ears. All this is super-rational. The agents of the Absolute appear among us in order to make the meaning of the spiritual Scriptures perceptible to our dormant understanding. The Scriptures require to be interpreted to us by those who know.

Those who are not prepared on principle to listen to the voice of the Absolute, need not decide that it is not the voice of the Absolute, before giving it their impartial and full hearing. Of course there is every risk of wasting our time on scoundrels personating as agents of the Absolute by dint of their sheer impudence. It should not, however, take much time or trouble for an honest enquirer to find these out. It is always possible to find the right teacher of the Absolute, provided one really wants to find him. The agent of the Absolute must also be eternally existent in the available form to all who want to find him at all.

Very few of us really want to find the teacher of the Absolute even if we know that it is easy to find him. Most of us have no interest for the Absolute. This is partly due to our traditional wrong conception regarding the nature of the Absolute. It is our purpose in this chapter to try to invite the attention of the reader to certain widely prevalent misconceptions regarding the

nature of the Absolute, by an examination of the extent of their deviation from the absolute standard.

The creeds that prevail in the world are divided naturally into two exclusive groups according as they happen to follow the method of empiric search of the Absolute or that of revelation. The empiric creeds may be broadly grouped into four divisions, viz., (1) Theism, (2) Agnosticism and Scepticism, (3) Pantheism, and (4) Undifferentiated Monism. The revealed religions show the following order of evolution, viz., (1) worship of God-head realised as a male Person (Vāsudeva), (2) as Couple (Lakshmi-Nārāyana, Rāma-Sitā), (3) as served by many married consorts (Dwārakesha Krishna), and (4) as served spontaneously by many consorts who follow no conventional matrimonial regulation in the coupled form of Sree Sree Rādhā-Krishna.

The instinct of the service of the Absolute is innate in human nature. It is, however, ordinarily overlaid with the negative dominating impulse of self-gratification. According as the one or the other impulse proves stronger, a man makes his choice as between the two broad divisions of religion. A person who has full confidence in his own powers in attaining the Truth, follows the empiric method. One who is convinced of the utter inadequacy of the human intellect to find the Truth, is inclined to follow the method of revelation.

The empiricist worships (?) the mixed product resulting from his actual sensuous experience. The word experience, as used in connection with empiricism, should be understood as referring exclusively to knowledge of the external world derived through the process of sense-perception. The sense-percept is the material or limiting condition of all mental process. The mind is the meeting-ground of the principle of animation with the inanimate material principle supplied by the senses. Mental activity is the reaction of the animate principle on the inanimate. It is a composite of two apparent incompatibles. No mental activity is possible unless both principles are present. The principle of animation is mixed up with, or overlaid by, that of inanimation, in the mental function.

It follows that empiric worship is bound to be either acceptance or rejection of the material principle, in one or more of its

aspects. In this case the mind is the accepting or rejecting agent. The mind cannot function except by way of acceptance or rejection of materials supplied by the senses. But the mind cannot cease to function. It must either accept or reject and must also continue to do so alternately. It cannot accept or reject for good. That would tantamount to its own destruction.

Atheism represents the temporary rejecting function of alternatives by the mind. The mind refuses to accept as true or desirable, because the two are really identical in this case, any stationary condition, for the reason that it is afraid that it would be suicidal. Atheism wants to live on the state of ever-changing activity. It is the proper negation of the Absolute conceived as Inaction. It is justified in disbelieving the Absolute by the evidence of its actual sense-experience. But it should by parity of reason be equally prepared to extend the bounds of its experience by any and every method. This, however, it is not always prepared to do. For instance, it refuses to accept the method of submission to the Truth for His realisation as enjoined by the revealed Scriptures. Atheism is thus proved to be an exclusive partisan of the method of empiric self-sufficiency in spite of its profession of freedom from all bias to creed and dogma. Its sterility is due to this hypocritical reservation. Its exclusive attachment to self-gratification is the cause of its disinclination to seek for the Truth and its consequent failure to find Him.

Agnosticism and Scepticism deny the existence of possibility of the Knowledge of the Absolute. Both do so on the strength of their limited experience and without due consideration of the method proposed by the Scriptures. Both have an attitude of disbelief towards the method of revelation by their over-confidence in their own conclusions. This is really self-contradictory as neither professes to be able to know the Truth. The Sceptic is the greater sinner of the two, because he is not even prepared to admit the very existence of the Absolute. Both really depend on the method of narrow dogmatism in their own cases although appearing to condemn the attitude in the case of others. The explanation of this irrational attitude is to be sought, as in the case of atheists, in undue attachment to the prospects of this transitory world which is father to the thought that it would be

heroic not to seek to fly from the state of ignorance and misery which is supposed by them to be unavoidable. The argument that is used by the theists is that ignorance and misery is due to the self-elected folly of the votaries of worldly vanities whose position is psychologically unsound and is also opposed to the moral principle. It is the Nihilistic attitude that becomes the worst of nuisances if it be allowed to pass itself off as a constructive ideal.

The pantheistic attitude is the most treacherous of all as it wears the mask of theism although in principle it is identical with atheism. The pantheists profess to see God in phenomenal Nature. This is the concrete denial of the Absolute. The theists do not counsel the worship of the limited and transitory. The pantheists affect to find no difference between this world and the spiritual realm. The pantheistic school appears in a variety of forms in this world. The most common group being that which bears the name of *Smārtas* in India. The *Smārtas* hold that the object of all worship enjoined by the Scriptures, is the improvement of our worldly felicity, present and prospective. The view finds its psychological support in the current literatures of the world which are busy in vindicating the ways of the world. What the atheist is really afraid of, is that he might be called upon to modify his worldly activities out of deference to any transcendental consideration which in his opinion cannot possess any present worldly value and may merely and falsely deprive him of a present felicity. This is met by the pantheist with the assurance that the transcendental would be of no use if it did not serve the plans of the worldling better than otherwise. The pantheist, however, cannot really adduce sufficient rational grounds for his contention except the testimony of experience of following the performance, in blind faith, of the ceremonials laid down in the *Shāstras*. The pantheists are, therefore, more grossly worldly-minded than even the professed atheists. They are often confounded with the genuine theists with whom they have nothing in common except their externals to a certain extent. The pantheists, themselves, however, oppose the *bona fide* theists tooth and nail in the matter of the proper interpretation of the Scriptures. It may be well to mention in this connection that the Scriptures do contain a large body of injunctions the performers

of which are promised the reward of increased worldly felicity. There are also text books that are specially devoted to the vindication and glorification of the worldly point of view. The reason of this, according to theistic interpreters, is that the Scriptures want to produce faith in the transcendental even in those who value nothing but worldliness. These worldlings are, therefore, promised what they want wrongly, on condition that they should submit to certain regulations. These regulations have been so framed as to serve the purpose of moderating their passion for present worldly enjoyment by promoting the attitude of reflection towards the past and future.

Karma or worldly activity is the starting point of all pantheistic thought. It has been analysed in all its bearings in special treatises of the Scriptures. Those treatises do not purposely go beyond the limit of the phenomenal world in those discourses, which are intended exclusively for the edification of those who are incapable of believing in anything higher than worldly activity. But any impartial examination of the subject is bound to lead to a clearer apprehension of the defects as well as the merits of the view that worldly activity can supply all our needs.

It is not my intention to suggest that whatever is contained in the section of the Scriptures dealing with rituals is necessarily true even from the worldly point of view. The *Smārtas*, indeed, hold that the rituals if properly performed, are really efficacious. This may or may not be so. The *Shāstras* contain numerous statements to the effect that the promise of worldly reward, is meant to induce persons with a childish judgment to be moderate in the matter of their sensuous enjoyment. This may mean that the spiritual object is alone true while every other prospect is fleeting and illusory. But the fleeting and illusory result itself is valued by worldlings above every other thing. Whether the proper performance of the rituals also actually yields the worldly results promised by the Scriptures, is not relevant for our present purpose and the matter may, therefore, be left open for those who want to speculate about it. This last is what the *Smārtas* and their school have been indefatigable in doing all over the world. These empiricists have also produced a Science of Theology which is wide of the mark for the spiritual purpose, although it may be

more intelligible to and at the same time be fully exposed to the attacks, of other sections of empiric thinkers.

The pantheists are worshippers of mundane objects possessing definite material form and quantity. For this reason they are condemned as idolaters by those who prefer more refined and intellectual forms of worship. It is, however, philosophically impossible to draw any line between one form of empiric worship and another. All empiric schools ultimately depend on one's individual judgment for the ascertainment of Truth. It has been shown above that the stuff of all such judgment is sense-percept which is thus the common object of worship in a gross or refined form of all empiric worshippers.

The pantheists are led by their particular predilection to appreciate the objects and relationships of this phenomenal world for their own sake in the light of their empiric judgment. They are not prepared to admit the possibility of the uselessness of such a quest not directed to a higher purpose. In other words, they confound matter with the soul on principle. This is inevitable inasmuch as and so long as they are not repelled from their conclusions by the actual experience of the essential triviality of all worldly pursuits for their own sake. This is a disposition which only experience can teach. The pantheists are those who are in the heyday of their career of worldliness with an increasing belief in its worth and prospects. The Scriptures lead these people gently by the hand by seeming to agree with their conclusions and trying to modify their cause by pleading the advantages of moderation even in the case of worldly activity for its own sake. This is naturally and honestly construed by those who are genuine believers in Pantheism as a confirmation of their view by the Scriptures. But once the value of spiritual support begins to be really cherished even those sections of the Scriptures that are apparently devoted to the elucidation of the pantheistic position, offer sufficient material for our serious consideration leading to increasing modification of the pantheistic view-point based thereon. The raw teachers of pantheism do incalculable harm by their narrow sectarian advocacy of the principle of worldly felicity on the authority of the Scriptures.

The unspiritual pantheistic view falls pat with the theory of Darwinian evolution and has accordingly captured the hearts of those modern scholars who are still under the spell of that theory. They are not, of course, prepared to admit their partiality for materialism, thanks to the way of escape that has been cleverly provided for them by the subtleties of the idealists who require careful attention from all students of the Absolute. The pantheism of Sree Sankarāchārya is the typical case. He is the intellectual protagonist of the pantheistic view, basing his conclusions on apparently rational interpretation of the Scriptures. The view, which has really been in existence from a period long anterior to the time of Sankara, in its present current form professes to follow mainly the exposition of Sankara. But Sankara himself is not capable of being properly understood by a materialist. The big literature of commentaries that has been brought into being by the pseudo-followers of Sankara presents not Sankara's view but that of the commentators themselves.

Sankara seems to justify the worship of Nature in order to be able to get beyond Nature to Nature's God Who, he declares, is unintelligible to the limited reason except as the incomprehensible reality identical with the cognitive principle. This analysis contains an encouragement to idolaters (pantheists) with a view to wean them ultimately from the worship of any form of mental concoction.

The real difficulty that is experienced in accepting fully the philosophy of Sree Sankarāchārya is that it is not possible to agree with his proposal in favour of the worship of Nature without discarding the purely spiritual point of view which the theory ultimately professes to seek to establish. By material means it is never possible to attain to the spiritual vision. Sankara does not also say so. He was forced to recognise the forms of pantheistic worship in order to get a hearing at all from idolaters. In this sense only his seeming advocacy of the cause of pantheism can be regarded as consistent with the spiritual standpoint.

But Sankara has been exploited for a quite different purpose by the school of undifferentiated cognitive Monism. They want to make the ultimate Reality devoid of all activity. They also want to make it a Unity that is unintelligible and inexpressible.

To this conclusion they try to arrive by following mainly the dialectic method of Sankara and secondarily by idealistic interpretation of the Scriptures. This is really empiricism pure and simple, the reference to the Scriptures being merely to fortify the conclusions of mental speculation. The objections to mental speculation as the method of quest of the Absolute, therefore, apply fully to this school. It is in fact in order to escape from this unanswerable charge that the believers in the undifferentiated *Brahman* are constrained to make their inconsistent appeal to the Scriptures.

Looked at from the point of view of material thought the activity or existence of the spiritual principle is only capable of being negatively suspected by it. There can be no actual touch between material thought and the transcendental Absolute. This is admitted by Sankara who looks at the Absolute from His plane. But the words of Sankara are not comprehensible to those who do not possess the transcendental altitude of his vision. The seemingly negative conclusion of Sankara is accepted without its all-important reservations by the egoistic disposition of empiric thinkers who can follow Sankara only to a certain distance in the negative way. This is not their fault. It is inevitable. The spiritual issue can never be approached by mental speculation. It is the purpose of Sree Sankarāchārya to demonstrate this to all open-minded persons by argument that is also intelligible to mentalists. But those who do not possess the requisite openness of judgment necessarily misunderstand the purpose of the great Āchārya.

The above four groups with their variants into which the empiric creeds are divided have been eternally occupied in propagating views that are calculated to lead us away from the quest of the Absolute. Unless one is prepared to cease to be guided by the accumulated load of misconceptions that have been sedulously impressed upon him by every empiric institution of this world it is not possible to be able to be disposed to catch the real meaning of the genuine teacher of the Absolute. That which I am going to relate next is, therefore, categorically different from the subject-matter treated by the empiric creeds. The Absolute is claimed to be the Reality proper that is eternally located beyond

the scope of all experience of the limited and transitory available through the physical senses. The very first question that has to be answered before actually beginning a narration of the Absolute, is whether it will be possible for ordinary people of this world to catch the true meaning of such a narrative. The answer is given by the Scriptures. They say that the ordinary human being, provided he at all believes in the Absolute and is prepared to give Him his unconditional hearing, can by listening to the exposition of the activities of the Absolute recorded in the Scriptures from the lips of self-realised souls attain to the knowledge of the Absolute, by the grace of the latter. This method is different from that of empiric quest and leads to a definite and thoroughly dependable result.

The personal factor which is capable of being done away with in empiric epistemology, is the central and abiding feature of the method of the quest of the Absolute enjoined by the Scriptures. The Guru is the pivot of the whole process. The Scriptures regard the quest of the Absolute as identical with the quest of the spiritual preceptor. As soon as the spiritual preceptor is found the negative quest gives place to the positive knowledge.

Therefore the question is resolved into the quest of the spiritual teacher. He is to be sought also by the spiritual method. There must be no empiric reservation in the quest which must be an exclusive search for the Absolute. This is the definition of *shraddhā* (faith). The necessity for it is not properly realised by everybody. Those who do not experience the necessity will not find the spiritual preceptor. Those who really feel it, will also find him. Till the spiritual preceptor is found it is idle to waste one's time on the study of the Scriptures. It is not possible to understand the narrative of the Absolute without the help of personal exposition by the preceptor. The preceptor and the disciple have to be brought into personal contact with one another if the latter is to benefit by the teaching. The personal relationship is that of absolute submission to the teacher on the part of the disciple. This must be so because the Predominating Absolute cannot be approached except by the method of absolute submission on the part of the predominated atomic particles.

This absolute submission must not be fictitious. It must also be personal.

The following narratives of the Absolute are found in the Scriptures. Their real meaning cannot be realised except by following the Scriptural method stated above. This discourse should be regarded as helpful in arousing faith in the Absolute by its rationalistic presentation of some of the grounds of such faith. It has a negative and symbolic value. It loosens the hold of empiric prejudices and thereby enables the Truth to be mirrored in our hearts opened to receive Him.

After the soul has got tired of the death-like monotony of mental speculations regarding the Truth and has also had sufficient experience of the delusive nature of both empiric knowledge and its promised prospects, he is inclined by a sense of sheer helplessness and misery to turn to the method of absolute submission to the spiritual preceptor and the Scriptures for relief. This negative attitude is turned into one of positive and earnest enquiry by accidental association with *sādhus*. It is for the reason of finding the *sādhu* that a person who is utterly disgusted with worldly living and the method of mental speculation, renounces the world and sets out on pilgrimage to holy places in search of self-realised souls who are supposed to reside at such places. It is rarely, indeed, that the true devotee of God reveals himself to the fortunate seeker. The *sādhu* is himself a transcendental being. To really know the *sādhu* is to be endowed with the spiritual vision. It is only by the Grace of God that the transcendental nature of His devotee can be realised.

It is only after the *sādhu* has been found that spiritual pilgrimage can really begin by the process of unconditional submission to his guidance. Then the disciple has to pass through the period of novitiate. If he does this with a guileless heart he is rewarded with the sight of God Himself and with His transcendental and eternal service. This last is the *summum bonum*. There is, however, gradation in the transcendental service of Godhead. It is not possible for the soul liable to conditioned existence to have the full knowledge of the Absolute. The jiva-soul is delicately poised on the border-line that separates the limited from the spiritual. He has the potentiality of affinity for either. His

affinity for the limited is due to freedom of initiative inherent in all animation conjoined to absence of perfect vision by reason of his tiny magnitude. Such affinity is, however, really opposed to his proper nature which is essentially spiritual. The affinity of the soul for the spiritual can, therefore, be maintained only by the help of souls who are not liable to affinity for the limited. These eternally free souls are the inseparable associated counterparts of the Supreme Soul or Godhead Himself. The *sādhus* have no mundane affinity. By the help of *sādhus* the conditioned soul is enabled to attain to the plane of the Absolute.

But the novice has to pass through definite grades of progressive revelation. The full view of the Divinity is the last to be attained. The service of Divinity attains its perfection only on attainment of the complete vision.

The first Appearance of Godhead to the view of the spiritual novice is as Vāsudeva or the Transcendental supreme single Male Person. This dissipates his empiric error that the Truth is an abstract principle. The appearance of Vāsudeva also frees the novice from the error that mistakes the Personality of the Absolute as having any mundane quality or reference.

Vāsudeva is self-revealed in the unobstructive cognitive essence of the pure soul. He is the positive Reality as distinguished from the abstraction of the mental speculationists from the fleeting impressions of deluding entities limited by material space and broken up by the operation of passing time. Vāsudeva is located above and beyond this unwholesome mundane plane. The realisation of His Transcendental Personality is possible only to the spiritual cognitive principle, which is the essence of the soul, as distinguished from material or limiting principle. Vāsudeva is the One Person without a second. He is a Person with a Transcendental Figure resembling the actual form of a male human being but, inconceivably to us, free from all limited or unwholesome characteristics of the human form that is familiar to us. Vāsudeva appears as the Sole Recipient of our service. He is realised as comprehending all existence including that of His servitors. He is Male but free from all mundane associations of sex. These opposite qualities are spontaneously reconciled in His Transcendental Personality.

This is the first positive spiritual experience of the progressing novice. The worshipper of Vāsudeva is, therefore, a truly spiritual devotee. He is categorically different from the atheist, agnostic, sceptic, elevationist or salvationist who are all of them strictly confined to the mundane plane. The worship of Vāsudeva is performed by the spiritual essence of the pure soul on the transcendental plane. Vāsudeva can be worshipped only by the process that is absolutely free from all mundane reference. Therefore, the worship of Vāsudeva is also a gift of Vāsudeva Himself. Vāsudeva is identical *in essence* with His worship and with His worshipper. All of them belong to the same plane of the soul which is located beyond the scope of our limited mental faculties. Vāsudeva manifests Himself to the pure essence of the jiva-soul as soon as the latter is at all disposed to serve Him in the proper way. It is rarely that a conditioned soul can attain to the spiritual service of Vāsudeva. The conditioned soul is ordinarily prepared to be content with negative speculation. Very few persons of this world realise the necessity of search for the Supreme Personality Who is revealed to us by all the Scriptures.

Everything concerning Vāsudeva is purely spiritual. His name, servitors, paraphernalia, abode, form, activities are an inseparable part and parcel of Himself. No amount of description can enable the reader to realise the nature of Vāsudeva so long as one is not freed from the fetters of his limited faculties of apprehension. Vāsudeva can be realised only by the grace of His devotee if we are really prepared to follow his instructions in every act of our life. The devotee of Vāsudeva can alone properly instruct us regarding the nature of the receptive attitude that is the natural position of the pure soul in regard to the Absolute and which can be restored to the conditioned soul only by the grace of Vāsudeva if its attainment is sincerely desired by him, by the grace of His devotee.

The sight of Vāsudeva disposes of all the doubts and difficulties of atheists and agnostics and sceptics, as a matter of course. The sight of Vāsudeva also destroys the idols of the pantheists and the nihilism of the pseudo-monists. The Truth is actually found to have the figure of a human being. This is not in any way derogatory to the Truth. Man is located in the middle position. There

extend on either side of him, above and below, two infinite gradations of superior and inferior beings. Godhead would, therefore, be conceived by our limited understanding as occupying the highest position in the series. But would this assumption be also logical? The prevailing notion in favour of making Godhead something altogether unlike man is no less fanatical than the opposite notion cherished by the anthropomorphists of making Him identical with man. It is not impossible to steer clear of this double fanaticism. The Scriptures declare that Godhead possesses a Form that is identical with Himself and that the Divine Form is ultimately like that of man. Godhead has an infinity of Forms but His Human Form is His Fullest, Highest and His Own Specific Personality.

So Vāsudeva is not to be confounded with any object of Physical Nature nor with any product of mental speculation. He is located beyond Physical Nature and beyond the mental scope. Yet Vāsudeva has the Form of a human being. He has an infinity of Forms who are secondary extensions of this original Divine Form. The Scriptures fully support the Biblical dictum that man is made after God's own image. It is needless to labour the point further at this place.

The sight of Vāsudeva, therefore, shatters all idols and substitutes of Divine Personality by revealing the real Object of all worship. This is the beginning of positive theism. Vāsudeva, by His Human Form, pervades the whole world. Hence He is Vishnu. But Vāsudeva pervades the mundane world without being of it. As pervading Physical Nature Vāsudeva bears the name of Vishnu. Those fortunate souls who realise this fact are called Vaishnavas or worshippers of Vishnu. No one who is not a Vaishnava can be a theist. The Vaishnava is endowed with the experience of the transcendental plane and is thus in a position to understand how Godhead pervades all Physical Nature without possessing any mundane organs or forms. The enlightenment is imparted by Vāsudeva Himself.

The soul of man can know Vāsudeva by His grace. The corresponding attitude in the recipient of His Grace is that of the unconditionally submitting disposition. If a person is not prepared to submit unreservedly for being enlightened by grace he cannot attain to the sight of Vāsudeva and is doomed by his own vain

choice to grope endlessly in the dark, unwholesome labyrinths of Physical Nature. By such unspiritual activity the soul may attain all conceivable conditions on the higher and lower mundane planes, but he can never attain to the vision of Vāsudeva. Vāsudeva has strictly reserved the right of not being exposed to the view of the conditioned soul who is not prepared to render Him willing and unconditional service. Vāsudeva manifests Himself to the unclouded cognition of the soul in his perfect state of causeless, spontaneous, submissive devotion to Himself. So the two processes are simultaneous without being in any way related to one another as cause and effect. This is inconceivable to the limited experience of men but need not be logically considered as impossible in the Divinity. It ensures the reconciliation of perfect freedom of initiative on the part of the individual soul with the necessity of unconditional dependence on the Divinity for all real well-being. The empiricist's contention that as all language is a product of the limiting energy in the form of mundane Nature the very terms used to denote a spiritual entity only prove the inevitable mundane origin of an idea, does not apply to the case of the revealed vocabulary. It is not the contention of the transcendentalist that the Reality is more than one. What the transcendentalist declares is that there is possibility of suppressed, blurred and misguided vision of the Reality. The Energy that causes this distortion necessarily creates the mundane world of the distorted vision as the complement of such vision. The whole affair is not also unrelated to the Reality. It is the deluding face of the Reality Who is undoubtedly One. There is thus a running correspondence between the mundane and the transcendental as far as there is no actual suppression of the latter. The vocabulary of this world is, therefore, applicable also to the transcendental realm but only in the transcendental sense.

The real difficulty is that the transcendental sense cannot be possessed by any one who is not favoured by the Grace of God. The actual number of such persons in the state of grace is very small in this world. The voice of this infinitesimal minority is liable to be ignored by those whose object is to proclaim views arrived at by their limited experiences. Once the necessity of the transcendental vision is properly aroused in any person he is not

likely to urge these empiric objections against the transcendental position.

The name 'Vāsudeva' is identical with the Divinity. But this is true in the transcendental sense only. In the transcendental sense, however, it is really true. Nay more, Vāsudeva is the only real Truth. He is the Absolute Truth Himself. The empiric limited, relative apprehension of the name Vāsudeva is not Absolute Truth. It is the product of the distorted view of the Truth Who can be but Absolute. In this distorted sense the empiric realisation is not untrue. But it is not given to those who are themselves under the delusion to realise this actual state of affairs. The person who possesses the absolute vision can alone understand the real position of the empiricists. He does not ignore the empiric view nor denies its existence. He only says that it is real, but distorted, view of the Truth Who is one and the same in Himself.

It is of course not possible to push the empiricists up to the transcendental level by the force of controversy alone. Because all appeal to the empiricists on behalf of the Absolute is ultimately based on the realisation of the Absolute as the only Reality. So long as a person does not possess the actual experience of the Absolute he can but look through the false glasses that are alone available to him. The empiricist can have no real Sight of the Absolute as He is, till he is favoured by the Grace of God. At the most he can only admit the necessity of Divine Grace for obtaining the view of the Absolute, Real or Substantive Truth. It is only then that he can really understand the true meaning of the proposition regarding the Absolute, *viz.*, that the Name Vāsudeva is identical with Godhead Himself.

Therefore, those who may be disposed to accept in principle the worship of Vāsudeva but are opposed to the phraseology and ritual that are actually employed in His worship, still continue to flounder in the empiric bog. Such blind assent will do them no real good. Their assent is assent in the empiric sense which is no assent to the Absolute. But there is also such a thing as real assent to the Absolute. This assent is the attitude of the awakened soul. This assent is identical with the whole process of worship of Vāsudeva, including its ritual and vocabulary.

The objection to detail under the cover of a general assent to principle, is a dangerous ruse that is often resorted to by self-deluded mentalists for avoiding the clear confession of the Truth. The attitude is really at the far end the product of that radical insincerity of disposition which feels an abnormal perverse joy in opposing the Truth at all costs. The objection against the vocabulary and ritual should be perfectly untenable if it is made to rest, as it really is, on such thin casuistry. There does exist the legitimate objection against lifeless ritual and pseudo-exhibitions of irrational orthodoxy. But even condemnation of the hypocrite, however justifiable in itself, is liable to degenerate into the most subtle and dangerous form of insincerity if it does not proclaim a stronger inclination to the Truth Himself.

As a matter of fact the Truth is one and indivisible. But He is not, therefore, really zero. When we think of Him we require to be on our guard against worldliness on the one hand and hypocrisy on the other. The one leads to worship of Physical Nature or Pantheism in all its forms, and the other to Nihilism which is only the negation of Pantheism and can exist at all only in a relation of contradiction to it. Both Pantheism and Non-ism are accustomed to profess its identity with Monotheism. The followers of both creeds are worldlings of opposite schools who have no intention of acting up to their professions. Neither is it practicable for them to do otherwise. It is possible for them to be relieved of these anomalous conditions only by the actual realisation of self-consistency by the attainment of the real knowledge of the Truth which none of them possesses. The empiric ignorance of Truth is not one of degree. It is one of category. The empiricists can form no idea of the nature of the Truth as He really is. For such a person to set up as a critic of the Truth, is sheer folly and malice. To try to mask one's foolishness and malice under the garb of a kind of a hollow ethical prejudice, makes it doubly worse. The empiric critics of the worship of Vāsudeva formulated in the Scriptures, should not ruthlessly sin against these universal canons of sound constructive criticism.

It is for this very reason that the study of the Scriptures is forbidden to those who do not possess the necessary preliminary knowledge that should effectively prevent the assumption of an

attitude of profanity. There is nothing to be gained by any form of real opposition to the Truth. Even the empiricists should be able to see this although in their distorted manner.

The different creeds and Scriptures as interpreted by the empiric judgment, tend to the elaboration of a hybrid theology that is neither here nor there. Empiric theology is a sheer contradiction in terms. The Absolute comprehends everything but is Himself ever incomprehensible. The empiric judgment is not honestly prepared to admit that the Absolute is the only Substantive Existence. The moment that we admit this we realise the necessity of waiting on the pleasure of the Absolute in all our activities. Vāsudeva is pleased to reveal Himself to this purified submissive state of the soul. The pure soul fully recognises the causeless Grace of Vāsudeva as the sole sufficing cause of the realisation of the Incomprehensible by our present otherwise limited faculties. The pure soul deduces all his conclusions regarding propriety of his conduct from this fundamental admission.

Once this position is really taken up by the soul he ceases to quarrel with the Scriptures even when he does not understand. He now knows that it is not possible nor necessary to understand the Truth in the empiric sense of the term. There is such a thing as real understanding which can be only a gift from the living Truth and identical with Him. The appearance of the Truth on His own initiative is both the cause and result of all real knowledge. These processes are one and indivisible. They only manifest themselves to the receptive consciousness of the submissive soul by their own free choice. The empiric attitude is that of revolt against this unconditional supremacy of the one living Truth. It stands in the way of unreserved faith in the Scriptures as the necessary preliminary condition of the right understanding of the Absolute. The attitude of submission to the Absolute is neither blind nor slavish nor a gross form of superstition. It is the awakening of the real rational function of which all mental activity is but disloyal, hideous caricature.

The spiritual guide who imparts the knowledge of the Absolute is then found to be part and parcel of the true rational existence. The rituals of the spiritual Scriptures are realised as the eternal

function of the soul who is by his real nature free from all worldly taint and weaknesses.

The fool's paradise is the one that all persons possess by the inalienable right of mundane birth. It is superfluous to carry the same into the real paradise. It is necessary for the attainment of this latter purpose to desist from the building of Babel. It is necessary to desist from all speculation on the subject as it is obstructive of the advent of the Truth. The Truth is ever seeking entry into the heart that is really open to welcome Him. The closed heart alone is busy in the fool's paradise and with its own disloyal fancies. Till one really knows Him one need not proclaim that he does. This rule is admitted by all but is observed by very few persons when they try to talk about the real Truth. The Truth can never be mastered by our puppy brain. It is the puppy brain that should be allowed to be mastered by the Truth for its own benefit. But it is the Nature of Truth to accept only perfectly willing service. It is, therefore, only necessary to reject all untruth and to await the coming of the Truth. This can be done if we only choose to do it. When one wishes to render such unconditional homage to the Truth his wish is fulfilled by the Truth Himself. The cobwebs of a deceptive moral code cannot then any longer bind his eyes and stifle his heart's sincerity. Vāsudeva then manifests Himself to the pure essence of the soul of His loyal devotee.

As soon as a person is really established in the worship of Vāsudeva by His Grace he is endowed with the disposition that opens up to his vision the definite vista of the Divine Realm. He is conducted by the Light of Vāsudeva into the Realm of the Absolute. He finds it inhabited by the servants of Vāsudeva. Vāsudeva now presents His fuller Aspect in the coupled Form of Lakshmi-Nārāyana, the Eternal Lord and His one eternal Consort ever linked to His side as His Counter-Whole. Lakshmi is found to be the medium of all well-being.

Personality is conjoined with sex in the experience derived through our limited senses. The principle of sex need not, therefore, be dismissed as necessarily inapplicable to the Absolute. Male and female run through all physical Nature binding together its jarring elements in a union of wonderful harmony. Why should

the sex be regarded as less indispensable in the Realm of the Absolute?

The principle of personality implies the co-existence of a specific free will and its possessor. Thus stated it would seem to exclude all reference to sex. The will is found to be the same in both male and female in this world. Sex does not seem to modify the specific nature of the individual will. It is perfectly possible to conceive a female form being endowed with the will of a male or *vice versa*. The factor of the sex seems to lie on the surface. As Godhead and the individual soul are ordinarily identified as regards their essence with the cognitive principle itself it is imagined to be in keeping with such identification not to admit the presence of the sex principle in Godhead.

This is, however, merely the psychological explanation of the genesis of the view that ultimately favours the idea of impersonality. But impersonality cannot stand on its own legs; it necessarily implies the personal. God should include both. He should be both personal and impersonal. But He could not be positively real without being personal. The negative quality can be but a background but cannot itself be the picture. The impersonal idea is at best of the nature of an inferential surmise of the Reality from an unrecognisable distance. The closer view relieves us from the necessity of retaining the dogmas of impersonality and abstraction.

Why should not Godhead be a Person? Why should He not be Male or Female? Why should He be only sexless? As a Person why should He possess no Form corresponding to our physical body? And corresponding to these arise the questions "Why have I a sex? Is the sex a constituent of my present personality? Would my personality suffer by elimination of sex? What connection has the principle of sex with the physical body? Will my personality be modified by any change in the physical body?" These and similar questions lie at the very basis of the individual life.

The rational attitude should be to recognise the fact of the sex and to admit the existence of a corresponding spiritual principle. But it is not possible for a person on the strength of mundane

knowledge to form any idea of the nature of the spiritual principle. We are sometimes disposed to think that it is given to us to approach the Absolute by way of service in certain forms. The issue of sex gives the direct lie to any such supposition. It shows clearly that it is never possible to rise from the physico-mental plane to the spiritual. This of course holds also in the case of similar empirical assumption regarding any other principle of spiritual service.

But we can understand by the parity of reason that the principle must exist in an inconceivable form. We are supported by the Scriptures. *Sreemad Bhāgavatam* makes the subject its central topic, round which all other topics are made to turn. The principle is found to occupy a correspondingly important position in the life of man in this world. So there is nothing peculiar or objectionable about the position. The objection of purists is due to the ignorance of the full claim of the Absolute.

By means of argument alone we cannot go beyond the point that we have now reached. The sex is found to be admissible in the Absolute. But the nature of the Personality of the Divine Couple, Sree Sree Lakshmi-Nārāyana, is otherwise unintelligible to the limited understanding. Its knowledge can only be received by grace and is, therefore, a matter of actual realisation on the path of spiritual endeavour.

We, therefore, reach the conclusion that the Divinity is a Transcendental Person. His Personality manifests Himself to us at first as that of a Male. This is the realisation of Divinity as Sree Vāsudeva. But on closer acquaintance we find His fuller Form of the Eternal Couple, *viz.*, Sree Sree Lakshmi-Nārāyana. Sree Nārāyana appears as the Lord, Sree Lakshmi as His Consort. Sree Nārāyana is the Wielder and Sree Lakshmi is the Executrix of the Divine Will. Sree Nārāyana manifests all His Activities through His Counter-Whole. This is the nature of relationship between the Divine Couple.

The Sanskrit word “*Shakti*” expresses the spiritual principle that corresponds to the female. The word may be rendered as “Energy”, “Potency”, or “Power”. Sree Lakshmi is Divine Power. The personality of Power is feminine, that of the Possessor of Power is Masculine. Godhead is the Possessor of infinite

Power. Power is not dissociable from her Possessor. In this sense Divine Power is identical with Godhead. But Godhead is more than His Power. He is the Source and Wielder of Power. In exercise of His Power Godhead is realised as Couple. Godhead is fully realised as co-existing with His eternal Consort. The nearest physical analogy is that of the Sun in the embrace of the assemblage of heat and light. Neither light nor heat is the Sun who is their otherwise unknowable Source. They are manifestations of the potency of the Sun. It is not possible to describe the relationship of Power with the Source of all Power in terms of any mental or physical experience. It is possible only to indicate it by way of an extremely imperfect analogy.

The Eternal Consort of Godhead co-exists with Godhead. She is the predominated moiety of the Absolute. The predominating moiety is her Lord and Master, Godhead Himself. This is the fuller idea of the Divine Personality. In the soul of man there also exists will in the embrace of power but both of them in an infinitesimally small measure. This smallness of his magnitude is realised by the individual soul by the service of the Divine Couple. It is possible for the soul of the *jīva* to try to live on his own paltry resources. This leads to a wrong estimate of his place and function in the Absolute. The point of view that such a course produces is responsible for the misdirection of the soul's activities in the state of self-elected wilful ignorance that is to be found in this world.

So there is progressive revelation of the nature of the Divinity on the path of pure spiritual service. The upward tendency is towards realisation of the nature of the full scope of all the concrete relationships imperfectly mirrored in the deluding correspondences of this world, by the soul of man. In this world it is given only to man to have a corresponding existence. The soul of man is thus truly the centre of the phenomenal cosmos. This is not the case with any other sentient being, either higher or lower, of this world. The beings of apparently more favoured mundane worlds live under conditions that are less favourable for the realisation of the Absolute. This is due to the fact that they find their position more enjoyable. For the opposite reason the beings of

lower worlds or stages are also placed in a worse position than man with reference to the Absolute.

These infinite gradations of life also exist as their corresponding realities in the realm of the Absolute, enveloping the human personality by their serving activities and affording necessary guidance for the realisation of the most perfect service that is found also here on the plane that corresponds to that of humanity. Sree Sree Lakshmi-Nārāyana are Objects of worship of this spiritual human plane. They enable us to attain the realisation of the concrete relationship of human service in its diffident forms. The development of the serving principle leads gradually to the inner and more concrete planes of the worship of Rāma-Sitā, of Sree Krishna in Dwārakā, of Sree Krishna in Mathurā and finally of Sree Krishna in Brindāvana. The word “*rasa*” means that which produces the sensation of “*taste*” in its most comprehensive sense. That which imparts to human life the quality of being tasted by its possessor is the most fundamental of all principles of value of life. The range and quality of the realised taste-imparting principle is the cause of the desire for and bliss of existence. Man lives here in this world on the sweets and bitters of his mundane sojourn. If he is deprived of this faculty of taste life is rendered meaningless and contemptible.

The leavening principle points to the sexual relationship as one of its cardinal references. This is consciously realisable by most persons in their actual relationships in this world. But the sexual relationship, although capable of being reached by way of argument as forming directly or indirectly the basis of all sweetness and bitterness on the mundane plane, is itself apprehended as a dangerous, delicate and unintelligible subject. It is also the basis of the taste of grossness in its most unwholesome forms.

The worship of Godhead is realisable in terms of the quality of spiritual taste evoked and fostered by His service. The relationships of this world, supplied by their deluding correspondence, give a clue to the spiritual quality but they can never give any substantive idea of the reality which is free from all possibility of unwholesomeness. In fact it is the attitude of the individual soul that is the cause of all experience of unwholesomeness born of limited vision. As the scope of vision of the individual expands

he realises an increasing freedom from the sense of unwholesomeness. But this does not apply to the mundane plane where the so-called expansion of empiric knowledge (?) tends to multiply ignorance and the possibility of unlimited grossness.

The conclusion to which such considerations tend to lead may be stated in the following manner. Spiritual life is categorically different from the mundane. No activity on the mundane plane by its mere dimension or manipulation, can ever lead to the Absolute. The difference between the mundane and spiritual function, may be indicated by the corresponding difference of attitude towards the Absolute on the part of the individual soul. The mundane attitude is that of a desire to lord it over the Absolute. The spiritual attitude is that of service by the process of unconditional enlightening submission to the Absolute. In proportion as submission to the Absolute tends to be perfected by practice under the guidance of the Absolute, the scope of the spiritual vision of the individual expands and produces a corresponding progressive excellence of the tasting process. Judged by this standard the service of Sree Sree Rādhā-Govinda is the perfection of bliss attainable by the individual soul.

Not that Sree Sree Rādhā-Govinda is essentially different from Lord Vāsudeva. They are one and the same, being the Divinity Himself. But the worshipper of Lord Vāsudeva does not possess the full scope of spiritual vision. He can, however, obtain the expanded vision only by the faithful service of Lord Vāsudeva and by His grace.

The faithful servant of Lord Vāsudeva will find in the Object of his worship Sree Sree Lakshmi-Nārāyaṇa, Sree Sree Rāma-Sitā, Sree Sree Dwārakesha-Rukminisha-Krishna, Sree Sree Mathuresha-Krishna and finally Sree Sree Rādhā-Krishna in Brindāvana.

V. HISTORY OF ATHEISM

FAITH in a Personal Godhead and inclination to serve Him are not the artificial products of material civilization. Many books have been written by empiric thinkers to prove the historical origin of a belief in God as a product and concomitant of material circumstances. Such attempts betray an attitude of self-contradiction in regard to the nature of the super-mundane. These writers, almost deliberately confound religion, which is the eternal spiritual function of all individual souls, with the apparently similar mental speculations on the same subject although it is more or less admitted by all persons as lying outside the range of our sensuous experience. Nevertheless these assume religion to be the equivalent of a bundle of ideas that have their temporary existence in their own imaginations, and proceed to analyse what they suppose to be the similar mental phenomena of past generations with the tacit object of finding further support for, and for the elaboration of their pre-conceived views. Religion is supposed to be only a special department of thought produced by the mind by working on a particular aspect of the materials presented to it by the senses. This mental religion is more or less the method as well as goal of investigation of empiric moralists, theologians and scientists. Empiric criticism of the Bible and all mental treatment of the subject of religion, are vitiated by the adoption of this faulty method of begging the question at issue.

It is necessary to approach the subject with a mind free from prejudices that may have been engendered by such tentative and inconclusive speculations. Love for God and desire to serve Him are functions of the soul, and, as such, are located beyond the sphere of our physico-mental experience which is strictly confined to the sense-percepts of material space and time. They are not of the nature of positive or negative ideas, however refined, that have their non-permanent existence in our sensuous mind, nor are

they of the nature of physical activities in continuation of such ideas, that bear the names of "love" and "service" in the current speech of the world. These have a beginning and an end and by their nature are subject to perpetual modifications. But love of God and service of God which belong to the soul, are eternal and unchangeable. They are not erring mental notions but the reality in the form of the only function of our souls and belong to a plane of existence higher than the sensuous mind, to which no critic of the empiric school has any access.

But our sensuous minds are, and have been always, enabled, by the grace of God, to believe, no doubt dimly and imperfectly, in the great difference that must always exist between the physico-mental and the spiritual, whenever we are in a position to turn to the subject, which is always knocking at our door, our unbiased attention, *i.e.*, in other words, when we are sincerely desirous of knowing the Absolute. On the path of such enquiry, the first axiom to which our unreserved assent is invited is this, *viz.*, that the service of the Absolute is the only function of our soul in her pure, natural state. The fact may also be stated thus in terms of her present temporary, deluded existence, *viz.*, that the inclination to serve the Absolute is innate in the soul and is spontaneously aroused and asserts its superiority to all other forms of activity as soon as the nature of the service is properly explained, the resistance of her physical and mental equipments notwithstanding, provided she gives to the subject, which she is free to do, her unbiased attention. This natural inclination to serve God has been present in the souls of men in every position of their material civilization and independently of such civilization.

This inclination to serve God and the actual service of God which exist eternally, are screened from the view of deluded humanity by their preference for worldly activities through ignorance due to the desire for meddling with objects that seem to promise and also yield transient sensuous pleasures. But whenever there has been a determined effort by atheists to suppress religion altogether it has reacted against such pressure and successfully reasserted itself in a clearer form than before, triumphantly silencing its opponents. It is possible to write the history of this eternal conflict, in its various forms, of atheism against religion. The

history of theism which is eternal can, therefore, be said in this sense to begin with this world, *i.e.*, as soon as the individual soul comes under the conditions of material space and time, due to her eternal tendency towards the service of Godhead against her counter-tendency to worldliness, roused to activity by atheistical opposition.

Atheism, the correlative of theism, is of this world and has always existed, and has often predominated, in it. In this world men are found to be naturally divided into two mutually hostile groups, *viz.*, (1) those who seek what is permanently good for them, and (2) those who desire what appears to be pleasant, without considering the consequences of its acceptance. The number of those who belong to the first group has always been infinitesimally small in this world which is of the nature of a temporary abode, or rather, house of correction, of those souls who have lapsed from the state of grace by reason of their preferring the pursuit of selfish enjoyment to service of Godhead. Atheism has been, on the whole, the prevailing creed of this world. It has, however, been always compelled to masquerade in the garb of religion. But whenever atheism has been openly professed by the greatest leaders of thought and has appeared to be on the point of scoring a final and decisive victory over its rival with their influential support, the latter has invariably re-asserted itself, has demolished all efforts of the former and has consolidated its position by the refutation of such arguments as had been urged, or had seemed likely to be urged in the future, against it by its opponents, to an extent that was within the grasp of the contemporaneous generations. Atheistic opposition has thus resulted in the gradual and further elucidation of the theistic position. But although the opponents of theism have been silenced from time to time they are not always really converted to the views of their victorious rival, with the exception of a very small number; although most of them are compelled to profess a temporary, hypocritical allegiance to the manifested Truth, from worldly considerations. These hypocritical followers, indeed, afterwards prove the worst enemies of the re-established religion, and by their show of its acceptance prepare to betray the citadel to the enemy, till at last rottenness inside and outside the system necessitates a vigorous

re-assertion of the Truth for the benefit of the few who really want to serve God.

It takes a considerable time after birth for a man to acquire a fair measure of experience of the material world. The term 'matter' is applied to those external objects and their qualities that are perceived by the senses. In proportion as the senses of the child are developed they are enabled to have a fuller 'knowledge' of the qualities of material objects, and to enjoy in an apparently more and more 'conscious' manner the pleasures yielded by such exercise of the senses. The more the qualities of material objects are 'enjoyed' the stronger the desire for such enjoyment becomes, till gradually the minds of men become so devotedly attached to this pleasurable exercise of the senses that they have no taste left for anything else. The pleasures of sound, touch, colour, taste and smell thus tend to colour and impart an overpowering charm to all activities of the mind and invite the deluded soul to be naturalised to the condition. The soul once enslaved to the mental outlook cannot be roused to grasp the unwholesome, transitory character of the earthly sojourn although constantly reminded of the same by the most significant facts of her worldly experience, *viz.*, birth and death, and she seems to forget for all practical purposes the fact that as soon as one dies one ceases to have any further connection by way of continuity of consciousness with these very material objects that appear to possess a distinctive individual reference to him when alive. If by rare good fortune, the clear consciousness of the transitoriness of the worldly life is awakened in the deluded soul, she naturally tries to desist from the exclusive pursuit of worldly enjoyment and turns round to reconsider the whole position. A person who stops in the midst of his worldly pursuits to consider the implication of their transitory nature, puts to himself in some form or other these three questions, *viz.*, 'Who am I, the apparent enjoyer of this world?' 'What is this vast world itself?' 'What is the real nature of the relation between this world and myself?'

Whenever the soul with her back to worldly pursuits asks the above questions she finds the answer in her own awakened consciousness. The answer which the enquiring soul receives being put together in a systematic form, comes to be known as science and

philosophy. The answer which the soul receives may be either (1) her own real consistent answer or (2) of a heterogeneous character. But why does not the soul, who is in essence the same, receive the same kind of answer in all cases?

The real nature of the soul is purely spiritual. The answer which she gives when she is in her own proper condition is the true answer and is the same in all cases. This mundane world is not her real home. It is material, that is to say, not of the essence of the soul but the product of the deluding power of God which makes it resemble the realm of the spirit. The illusion-producing power who has made this world is of the nature of the shadow of the superior spiritual power of the Divinity. The individual soul is an infinitesimally small separable part of the latter whose nature she shares. The soul resident in this unspiritual world is under the delusion that her essence is material and she has a natural affinity with the deluding power although there is really no such affinity at all. This is a heterogeneous alliance. The deluded soul's own proper nature is eclipsed and becomes dormant by the operation of the deluding energy resulting in the apparent identification by herself of her function with those of the body and limited mind, being thus unnaturally alloyed with the qualities of material energy. The individual soul whose real nature is purely spiritual, on imbibing this mixed character by operation of the material energy of God, functions by direction of the material mind in accordance with the dictates of this adventitious, unnatural, 'second' nature. The spiritual principle of self-luminous cognition, by such subordination to the principle of limitation, is perverted into the mind of the fallen jiva which is an extraordinary mixture, or rather incarceration, of spirit in a subtle material case. The answers that the mixed mind under the lead of the deluding material energy of God, returns to the questions put to it, are also necessarily heterogeneous, that is, self-contradictory. These answers of the soul fettered in the material mind reflect the heterogeneity of customs, dress, food, language and mode of thought of the country of the temporary sojourn of the physical body which encases the mind. Differences in respect of place of residence, age and condition of the physical body, all tend to make the answer correspondingly different in every case. There is thus a twofold

perversion due to the twofold incarceration of the soul in matter, *viz.*, in the subtle form of mind and grosser form of physical body, by means of which she is deluded into relation of affinity with country, race, language, etc., which differ in the case of different individuals represented now by the physical body and mind.

In order to discuss in an adequate manner and in detail these heterogeneous answers it would be necessary to examine the history of all countries, to come into direct contact with the peoples by means of journeys through those countries and to master the different languages of the world. This is not the present purpose and a cursory glance at them will suffice to afford the reader a working idea of their general nature.

Of the above two kinds of answers received by the soul that variety which is true is also the one that is alone reasonable. The heterogeneous answers, although extremely diverse in character, are also, however, divisible into two distinctive groups. The first group constitutes the body of empiric practice and theory of truth; the second group is represented by activities devised for the purpose of securing selfish, transitory, material enjoyment [(1) *jnana* and (2) *karma*].

We have stated above that the true answer is also the rational one. If objection is taken to our use of the word 'rational' in this connection on the ground that the material reason admits its affinity with the heterogeneity of physical Nature, our reply is that the vocabulary that is available for expressing spiritual facts has acquired the material connotation by habitual abuse. The current vocabulary both as regards its derivation and usage refers really and exclusively to the transcendental. The words 'rational' and 'reason' used by us in connection with the soul have reference to the distinctive spiritual faculty inherent in the soul that can never err and always serves the transcendental Truth. The corresponding material faculty that dominates the eclipsed soul being subservient to the deluding energy, is, in the case of fallen souls, the approver, by its constitution, of the heterogeneous existence. This faculty in its normal, spiritual condition naturally responds *in the really rational way*.

That group of the two divisions of heterogeneous answers which has been named practice and theory of truth is the *perversion* corresponding to the Truth in the shape of answer returned by the pure soul that accepts the real and rejects the unreal. This heterogeneous 'knowledge' in its synthetic or positive aspect represents the qualities of matter and favours the view that matter is eternal and the ultimate cause of everything, and, negatively, tries to establish the view that the *Brahman* or the Absolute is devoid of all distinctive qualities, a conclusion which is reached by the denial of the existence of matter.

That division of the heterogeneous answer which has been named activity in quest of transitory, selfish enjoyment, is the pursuit by the soul, under the domination of the deluding power, of non-God. The correlative of this is the pure rational activity of the soul in the form of the service of Godhead by means of spiritual thoughts and deeds.

The heterogeneous answer, with which most of us are more or less familiar, may be conveniently considered under two heads, according to the nature of the object of human life offered for our acceptance which is either (1) material pleasure, or, (2) extinction of material existence. The heterogeneous answer confines itself, as regards its subject of reference, to phenomenal Nature which, according to this view, exhausts all existence. The view that holds material pleasure as the end is in its turn divided into two sections according as the pleasure to be pursued is either selfish or unselfish.

We shall consider first the view that the end of human life is the attainment of selfish material pleasure. According to the supporters of this opinion there is no God, no soul, no other world, and no moral consequence of acts done by us. Our only proper function is to spend the time in constant sensuous pleasures with discretion to avoid any unpleasant worldly consequence. Such view has seldom been fully acted upon in civilised society. It has remained practically confined as theory to the persons who have conceived and propounded it in the different ages and countries. Such individuals are the Brāhmaṇa Chārvāka in India, Yang Chu in China, Leucippus in Greece, Sardanapalus in Central Asia, Lucretius in Rome. Von Holbach maintains that the religion that leads

to one's own selfish pleasure, is alone admissible. Religion is defined by him as the contrivance of securing one's own pleasure by means of the pleasures of others.

The professed followers of unselfish material enjoyment have been very numerous and have in fact included the vast majority of the people in all ages and countries. The school of godless fruitive work (*karma-kandis*) of India is probably the oldest body of the credal followers of this view. According to this school *Iṣvara* (i.e., the Supreme Ruler) is an entity that has no antecedent (*apurva*). The view has been supported by learned mal-interpretation of the Vedic Scriptures. Democritus, the exponent of the view in ancient Greece, holds that unoccupied space and matter are eternal, the difference between substances being quantitative and not qualitative. Knowledge is merely the state of conjunction of certain external and internal substances. All substances are made up of atoms. Kanāda maintains the permanent qualitative difference between different classes of atoms. According to the Vaisheshika School the individual soul and the Over-soul belong to the category of substances. Plato and Aristotle do not admit God to be the only eternal entity nor as the only cause of the world. This makes their systems share the defects noticeable in Kanāda. Gassendi, Diderot and La Mettrie belong to this class. According to Comte we should regard theism as infancy, philosophy as childhood and positivism as mature stage in the evolution of thought. Men are required to be philanthropically disposed and to be disinterestedly religious in their conduct. The earth is the supreme fetish of Comte, the country his supreme medium and human nature his supreme being. Mill is in substantial agreement with Comte. The propounders of secularism in England include the names of Mill, Lewis, Paine, Carlyle, Bentham, Combe, Holyoake, Bradlaugh.

But the faculty of reason, even when it happens to be engrossed in matter, if only it could be induced to consider the subject in an impartial spirit, is bound to reject all these views for their extremely bad logic. The materialist proclaims the necessity and wisdom, above all things, of reducing the number of categories, and in fact it is this which leads him to deny the existence of the transcendental. But his own method leads him to the formula-

tion of an infinite number of categories. Materialism is artificial and unscientific as it ignores the principle of self-consciousness and holds material Nature to be eternal. It calls self-consciousness a quality of matter and at the same time asserts it to be the regulative principle of the entity of which it is declared to be the quality. It involves the subordination of the principle of self-consciousness, which is the better and higher principle, to gross matter (Ferris). There is no proof of the permanence of matter (Prof. Tyndal). Boucher and Moleschott hold matter to be eternal, which is, however, a mere assumption. The view of Comte that man should cease from the enquiry of the beginning and end of the world, if really followed, would reduce man to equality with lifeless matter. No instance of any self-born man or of a man generated by the process of progressive evolution is known within the last three thousand years of human experience. The argument from design, if it be admitted, points to the principle of intelligence as the cause of the cosmic order and would thus be a complete refutation of all forms of materialism.

If again we consider the actual conduct of materialists in regard to society we find that they hold it necessary for men to be religious in their acts. Sin and righteousness are held to be productive respectively of pain and pleasure of men in general. Pleasure for oneself should conform to the pleasure that is disinterested. By the practice of religion sin and its resultant misery are got rid of. It is necessary for men to investigate those laws that enable them to maintain their existence in society. The actions performed by men bear fruit even after their death for other beings of this world. In this sense acts never die. Acts are transformed into forces that did not exist before, such forces, being nourished by other future acts, are the cause of the continued improvement of the world. This is the disinterested reward of one's acts.

The professors of disinterested material pleasure as the object of human life are, in fact, identical with the school that regard the selfish pleasure of oneself as the object of life. This is proved by Von Holbach under the name of Miraboud in his "System of Nature" (1770). In that work he has shown that there is no such thing as disinterestedness in this world. Religion is only a

contrivance of securing one's own pleasures by making others happy. No one would care to do that which did not bring pleasure to himself. Even the sacrifice of life is made for pleasing oneself. All pleasures flowing from religion are for one's own self. Even love for God is for one's own pleasure. Whatever is natural is necessarily selfish because nature refers to the self. Selfishness is natural. Disinterestedness is unnatural and is never to be found.

The view that God is that which is without antecedent and identical with power or force, as propounded by Jaimini and Western scholars, never appeals to those who possess clearness of understanding. Those who accept their view have to be content with a part of the whole. The view of the non-antecedentists is directly opposed to the idea of God. Jaimini was well aware of the existence of a natural inclination in the hearts of men to submit to God and has accordingly very cleverly and with great assiduity conceived a god as the awarder of the fruits of our actions and included him in his category of the non-antecedent. It is due to this cleverness in providing a reference to a god that the view of the *Smārtas* Pandits advocating godless fruitive works, has been so vigorously prevalent in India. People with a cloudy intellect extend a ready welcome to the view of the professors of so-called disinterestedness in the hope of securing at a trifling cost the reward of unselfishness. This is another powerful reason for the spread of the creed of atheistic fruitive works.

The instructions of the professors of disinterested material pleasures may be appreciated at first, to a certain extent, by people by reason of their own selfishness; but they will scruple less to commit sinful acts the more they will enter into the spirit of the system. It is in this way that the system quickly enough degenerates into one of expediency pure and simple in which every individual member is free to act for his own pleasures in a way that appears to him to be not obviously against the general interest, and soon learns to care only for the external appearance of his acts. In the absence of a God to punish, the only check on the most reckless pursuit of selfish pleasures will be the fear of public exposure; and various expedients will accordingly be devised for avoiding the consequences of such a contingency. The truth of

this criticism is corroborated by the notoriously lax practices of the ordinary *Smṛta* Pandits who are adepts in twisting the rules to any extent to suit their individual purposes.

In the nominal provision for the worship of a god as found in this system we do not notice any of the characteristics of real devotion to God. Some of these even opine that the worship of God is only a variety of fruitive works; or, in other words, that it is prescribed for people in a general way and is optional in their own case. Comte has provided for the worship of his conceptions as God for the reason that they appeared to him to be true. In this Comte is more sincere; but Jaimini and the others are more far-sighted. The views of Comte and Jaimini are identical in theory. Those theories of the elevationists in effect sometimes affect to say to devotion, "I follow you. I make men fit for devotion to God. I shall bring the sinners to your feet after purifying their minds". These professions are the result of duplicity. When work truly follows devotion it does not claim any separate recognition of itself but is content to pass under the name of devotion. So long, however, as work is disposed to retain its own separate designation it seeks its own glorification as a rival process claiming equality with devotion. This attitude leads it to claim all credit for every effort for the advancement of science, of society and industry, etc., as flowing from itself. But as a matter of fact when such work is transformed into the nature of devotion, i.e., service of God, science, society, industry, etc., are rendered even more glorious and progressive.

The view that material extinction is the proper object of life is held by the philosophical schools of Buddhism and Jainism. The genesis of the view is supplied by the fact that material pleasure is essentially trivial and is not genial company for a spiritual being. The experience of this gives rise to the theory that all existence is misery. It is a significant fact that the ordinary Buddhist of to-day, at any rate in Burma, is not a pessimist. He believes that God exists eternally, that He has created the world. It is He who appeared in this world as the Buddha and always exists as God in Heaven. Men will go to Heaven by doing good works and by following the rules laid down by the Buddha. This is not the Buddhistic theory of the schools.

In fact these pessimistic views that have been adumbrated with so much subtlety of argumentation, are never accepted as common property by the Society. They are bound to remain locked up in books and in the minds of their teachers. The general population, if at any time they happen to pride themselves as the followers of these views, do so under the impression that those views are identical with their own cherished opinions which, as have been pointed out above, are nothing but the spontaneous concomitants of human nature. Love of Humanity as the object of life, as propounded by Comte, worship of God under the name of the Non-antecedent, a constituent part of his fruitive works, as devised by Jaimini, the theory of material extinction propagated by Sākya Singha, all of these are bound to be reduced by the general body of their respective practising followers to one common form, *viz.*, that of the religion that is natural to man. To this consummation they are tending even at the present moment.

The pessimists of Western countries come under this category. There is no such thing as re-birth according to these Western pessimists whose theory may be described as the view of material extinction as the desired end of human life which itself is limited to one single birth. The Buddhist and Jain Schools agree in holding material extinction as the proper end of human life attainable through a cycle of births and re-births.

According to Buddha the jiva can attain final extinction (*parinirvāna*) as the result of long practice of gentleness, patience, forgiveness, kindness, unselfishness, meditation, renunciation and friendliness. There is complete cessation of existence on the attainment of ultimate extinction (*parinirvāna*). After ordinary extinction (*nirvāna*) existence as kindness persists.

The Jains maintain that in accordance with the stage of advancement of the jiva due to the exercise of all the good qualities under the lead of kindness and renunciation he attains successively to the conditions of a Nārada, a Mahādeva, a Vāsudeva, a Para-Vāsudeva and finally the state of the Divinity involved in total material extinction.

According to both Buddhists and Jains the material world is eternal. Work which is without a beginning has an end. Existence is misery. Utter extinction (*parinirvāna*) is happiness. The

system of fruitive works propounded by Jaimini is harmful for the *jiva*. The rules that ensure utter extinction (*parinirvāna*) are alone productive of good. Indra and other gods although they are the masters of fruitive workers are the servants of those who follow the path of utter extinction (*parinirvāna*).

Schopenhauer and Hartmann are material extinctionists admitting a single birth. According to Schopenhauer extinction is attainable by renouncing the desire for existence, by voluntary abnegation (*tyag*), humility, acceptance of physical suffering, moral purity and ascetism (*rārāgya*). According to Hartmann it is not necessary to undergo any suffering. Extinction is easy of attainment after death. Herr Bensa has demonstrated the impossibility of extinction by asserting the eternal nature of misery.

Most of the followers of current monism are material extinctionists. One section of the monists hopes for the spiritual bliss of the *Brahman* after extinction; the other section accepting the extinction of all existence after death, does not admit any other form of bliss. It is these latter whom I have classed as material extinctionists.

In the theory of material extinction the specific nature of the *jiva* is left uncertain. All these speculations are altogether atheistical. These views having been put forward with the object of preventing the oppressions by the exponents of material fruitive works could be propagated with such great vigour by the enthusiasm and perseverance of their preachers. In India on account of the oppression practised on the Kshatriyas and the other *varnas* by the Brāhmaṇas in course of the latter's efforts to further the establishment of the godless creed of fruitive works and the universal supremacy of the Brāhmaṇas, the Kshatriyas banded together for the promulgation of the Buddhist, and the Vaishyas similarly combined to spread the Jain, creed. When the factious spirit is reinforced by the clash of worldly interests it operates with great vigour. The Buddhist and Jain views were propagated in India in this way. In those countries into which those views were subsequently imported they were accepted as God-sent due to the absence of a stronger critical faculty in the peoples of those countries. It is a matter of history that the

modern professors of material extinctionism in Europe, were led to propagate those views by their hatred of the Christian religion.

According to the Tāntric view the whole world including the *chit* and *achit* has been created by an eternal power named *Māyā*. When the zeal of Buddhist preachers cooled down due to the barrenness of the philosophy of their creed there was an attempt to rehabilitate those doctrines in a new garb. It is at this stage that the Buddhist idea was transformed into the *Tāntric* and the new theory known as *Māyāvāda* was propounded. This cult of *Māyā* passed under the name of Buddhism inside that religion. This subtle form of Buddhism under the separate designation of *Māyāvāda* spread rapidly among the non-Buddhist populations. We have the genesis of the illusionist Vedāntists when the cult of *Māyā* assumed the form of a philosophy resting on Vedic interpretation. The same cult obtained currency among the hill tribes as *Māyā-Sakti-Vāda* conforming to the Tantra Shāstras. The Tāntric view according to many is derived from the Sāṅkhya Philosophy of Kapila. But the latter is the progenitor of the Saiva cult in which physical Nature occupies an honoured position which may have been the cause of the mistaken view that assigns to the Tāntric cult its Sāṅkhya origin. In the Tantra physical Nature is the mother of the conscious principle but these two are co-ordinate in the Sāṅkhya philosophy. A form of extinction in the shape of absorption into physical Nature has also been imagined. The worshippers of the power of physical Nature sometimes supplicate her in imitation of the manner in which the professors of the principle of self-conscious power express the thoughts of their minds in addressing God (*vide* Holbach).

In the Mahānirvāna-Tantra Mahādeva in praying to the principal power Ādyā Sakti Kāli, addresses her in one passage as the creator of the world by the will of Para-Brahma. This corresponds to Sāṅkhya. But in other passages she is described as alone existing in the form of chaos (*tamas*) after dissolution of the cosmos (*pralaya*); and she is also declared to be identical with the self-conscious principle in the jīva. All this is directly opposed to the Sāṅkhya view.

It cannot be said that the Sakti-vāda of the Tantras originated from any philosophical system in particular. In fact the Tantra

is so full of self-contradiction that it does not admit of any systematic consideration. The distinctive Tāntric processes, *viz.*, the *latā sādhana*, the *panchamakāra sādhana*, *surā sadhana*, etc., do not appear to have been derived from any theistic philosophical system. Tāntric (*Saktivāda*) doctrine of supremacy of material power cannot be considered to be very different in character from the worship of the non-antecedent or god as mental formula (*mantram*) of atheistic fruitive works and the worship of physical Nature devised by Comte, etc.

There are a few scholars who admit the existence of nothing except mental ideas. They hold that the objective world has no real existence. Ideas are the only entities. The soul that is held by others as the subjective reality, is also ineffective. There is really nothing except ideas. Bishop Berkeley and a few others are more or less of this opinion. It is they who have given the view the name of Idealism.

Mill has also admitted this view to a certain extent. Idealism should not be regarded as identical with spiritualism. Idealism is merely the mental contemplation of material objects perceived through the senses. Such contemplation establishes the connection of the principle of self-consciousness with physical Nature. It is not essentially different from matter. Idealism is, therefore, by no means outside materialism. Among the undifferentiating monists a few have held that there are no such things as God or any substantive cosmic entities, but it is only the ideas of them that have existence and that it is the idea that is the undifferentiated truth. This view is altogether trivial. Its professors never acted up to their principles. Idealism should logically be classed under materialism.

There is a certain class of people who argue that what is supposed to exist, does not really exist. All entities are impermanent and they belong to the category of the non-existent as soon as they undergo transformation or destruction. Therefore, the non-existent is the eternal and true. This opinion has no substance. Such sophistical argument is advanced by a class of deluded people who are specially fond of indulging in abstruse futile hair-splitting.

That the non-existent is true is a proposition that carries its own refutation. From such abstruse speculations has arisen

a body of opinions which is known in the English language as Scepticism, supported by Hume and a few others. Scepticism, although in itself it is inconclusive and unnatural, was at one time welcomed by people and also accepted in practice. The doctrines of selfish material pleasure and material extinction give rise to so much mischief in the world that men came to entertain a great contempt even for the very name of such religion. The nature of man is pure and endowed with the tendency of devotion to God. It never finds joy in materialism. Scepticism is nothing but the last desperate attempt of the human reason to break its chains by its own strength after it is banished by materialism to the dungeon of ignorance and finds its hands and feet heavily fettered with chains of iron.

It was attempted to be established by rank materialism that matter is eternal and that matter alone is true. Many echoed the views of Huxley that no matter what the event may be unless it is affirmed to be the transformation of material causes it is not a scientific proposition. Nothing can be proved except matter and that which sets it in motion. The principles of cognition and feeling, it was affirmed, will be altogether discarded by the Scriptures in the long run. The soul will be steadily submerged under the rising tide of materialism. Freedom will be put into bondage by the dead hand of Providence. It was when a numerous body of men were arguing in this immoral strain that the nature of man feeling its own degradation made an attempt to direct its reason along a different track. Disregarding all the evil consequences of this new effort, being determined to destroy the materialistic theory at all costs, human reason gave birth to Scepticism. The evil in the form of materialism was undoubtedly got rid of but Scepticism did even more harm to theism than what it prevented. People began to suspect that we cannot find the real truth. We can only experience the qualities of objects. Where is the proof that even this experience is True? By means of the senses we perceive different qualities separately. As for instance we perceive colour by the eye, sound by the ear, smell by the nose, touch by the skin and taste by the tongue. The knowledge of the object is obtained by means of the aggregate of the qualities imbibed severally through the five channels of such knowledge.

We would have obtained the knowledge in a different form if instead of five we had ten additional senses. Under the circumstances whatever knowledge we happen to possess is wholly tentative and doubtful. By such Scepticism although materialism was destroyed, spiritualism did not profit in any way. Scepticism admits unreservedly the real existence of objects. What it asserts is that we do not possess any knowledge of the real nature of objects as our knowledge is imperfect, and also that we have no means of having the requisite kind of knowledge. Scepticism destroys itself in as much as it admits the undoubted existence of the reality. If there is such a thing as Absolute Reality Scepticism is left no ground to stand upon. On a careful consideration Scepticism appears to be meaningless jargon. Who is it that doubts that I exist?—I myself? Therefore, I exist.

All these three views, *viz.*, materialism or the doctrine of material power, idealism and Scepticism are forms of atheism that have existed from ancient times. These include all possible varieties of atheism. We have arrived at the conclusion after careful enquiry that the claims of the atheists of recent times to be propounders of original views, are untenable in every case. They always express only the old views under a different name and garb. Many systems of philosophy have been promulgated in this country. Of these *Sāṅkhya*, *Nyaya*, *Vaiśeṣika* and *Karma-mimāṃsa* are professedly atheistical. *Patañjala* and the pseudomonistic interpretation of *Vedānta*, are veiled forms of atheism. We can, in this place, only bestow a passing glance at them.

Sāṅkhya philosophical system—God cannot be proved.—“*Iṣvarāśidhch*” 1—92. If God is admitted He must be either free or dependent “*Muktabaddhayoranyatarābhavānnā Tatsidhīh*” 1—93. Free God is unrealisable. Dependent God has not the quality of Godship. Bijnana Bhikshu commenting on this says that the following is, therefore, said in regard to the particular passages of the Scriptures bearing on God, “that they are merely eulogistic of the free soul or in praise of the successful pursuit of religious activities. God does not really exist”, “*muktatmanah prasamshā upāsāsiddhasyavā*”, 1—96. This much for *Sāṅkhya*.

The System of Nyaya philosophy—It is made by Goutama. Goutama says that there are sixteen entities, “*pramāṇa-prameya . . . nihshreyashādhigamah*”. The state of the highest good (*nihshreyah*) of Goutama is unintelligible. It appears as if the good of the *jiva* is attained if he can prevail in argument. God does not find a place among his sixteen entities. It is for this reason that the Veda says that the natural inclination to God should not be allowed to be obsessed by casuistical argument. Goutama also notices the principle of evil. “*Duhkha-janmapravritti-dosa-mithyājnāna nāmūttaraottarāñcē tadanantarāpāyādāpavargah*.” Deliverance (*mukti*) is regarded in a general way as the cessation of extreme misery. According to Goutama there is no joy in the state of deliverance. Therefore, there is absolutely no such thing as Divine bliss. Whence the *Nyāya Shāstra* made by Goutama, is opposed to the *Vedas*.

Vaishesika philosophy made by Kanāda—This system does not call for any elaborate discussion. If we consider the original *sutras* made by Kanāda himself we do not find any eternal God therein. Certain authors of this school have made an attempt to divest their system of its God-less-ness by naming as super-soul (*paramātma*) a principle under the entity ‘embodied’ (*dchi*) which is one of the seven entities. But scholars such as Sankarāchārya, etc., in their respective commentaries on the *Vedānta-sutra*, have stated as their conclusion that the Kanāda-doctrine is non-Vedic and godless. As a matter of fact it is found that those who do not admit that God is the Supreme Master without any reservation, even although the word God be found in their systems, are really atheists. It is the Nature of God that He must be recognised as the Lord of all entities. The view which admits the existence of eternal entities on a footing of equality with God, is atheistical.

Karma mīmānsā—Jaimini is the author of the original *sutras* of this system. He makes no mention of God. His premier subject is *dharma*. “*Chodanā lakshanortho dharmah. Karmaike tatra darshanat*.” The meaning conveyed by the *Vedas* is *dharma*. Its name is *karma* (work). His commentator Sabaraswāmi

writes in this connection as follows: ‘*Katham punaridamavagamyate? Asti tadapurvam.*’ How is this to be known? Therefore,

there must be an entity which bears the name of ‘previously non-existent’ (*apurva*). When work is performed something previously non-existent is thereby manifested which awards the fruit. Where is the necessity of a god for bestowing the fruits of actions? What more is there that could have been said by modern atheists such as Comte, etc.?

Vedānta—The Vedānta philosophy supports in every way devotion to God. In its commentaries dishonest thinkers have interpolated veiled Buddhistic thought under the garb of non-distinctive monism. But saintly persons have shown the good path to the people of the world by composing with great care proper commentaries of the original *sutras*. We shall consider the futility of monism in another place.

Yoga—The *shāstra* made by Patanjali Rishi bears the name of *Yoga-Shāstra*. The following *sutra* is embodied in the chapter on method of the *Shāstra*: “*Klesakarma-bipākāshayairaparāmrīstah purusavisesha Iṣṭarah. Tatra niratisayam sārvajnyavijam. Sha purbesāmapi guruh kālenānava-chchedāt.*” The being capable of taking the initiative untroubled by tribulations in the four forms of misery, work, consequence (*bipāka*), subject (*āśraya*) bears the name of god. In him is located the seed of extreme omniscience. He is the preceptor of all the people that have gone before, in as much as he is uninterrupted by time. This statement of the subject of Godhead in this system has led many to think that Patanjali is really a devotee of God. But one who has read the Pātan-jali Yoga Shāstra to its conclusion with special care and judgment, cannot be so mistaken. In the *Kaivalyapād* occurs the principle “*Purusārtha-sunyānām pratiprashavah kaivalyam svarupa-pratisthā vā chitisaktiriti,*” which is thus explained in the Bhojabritti: “*Chichchaktervrittishārupyanivrittou svarupamātravasthānam tat kaivalyamuchyate.*” The non-alternative state (*kaivalya*) is the name of the existence of the cognitive principle in its own proper condition. The point that requires to be considered in this connection is this, viz., what is meant by ‘the proper condition of the cognitive principle’? That is to say, whether the *jīva* who has attained the non-alternative state (*kaivalya*) will have any function? After the *jīva* has attained the non-alternative state (*kaivalya*)

valya) what will be his relation with the god of his unrealised state? In the said *Shāstra* there is unfortunately no answer to this question. On repeated reading of this *Shāstra* one is convinced that its god of the state of unrealised effort, is a kind of entity that is conceived merely for the success of worship. He is not to be found in the realised state. Can such *Shāstra* be considered as theistic?

All these atheistical opinions have been preached in this as well as other countries under different names due to difference of language.

Reason is of two kinds, *viz.*, pure reason and adulterated reason. The faculty of the soul in its pure state that applies itself to the examination of the self-conscious, may be described as pure reason. It is without defect and is a function which is natural to the soul. The perverted form of the above faculty due to association with the material principle that is found to guide the soul when she is engrossed in matter, is the adulterated reason. This adulterated or pseudo-reason is of two kinds, *viz.*, (1) alloyed with fruitive works (*karma-misrā*), and (2) allied with empiric knowledge (*jnana-misrā*). It is also called sophistry (*tarka*). It is this which is condemnable for the reason that there happens to be present in it the following defect, *viz.*, error (*bhrama*), delusion (*pramāddā*), deceit (*bipralipsā*) and inefficiency of the organs (*karanāpātara*). Its decision is defective in all cases. That which is established by the real reason is the same in all cases. The opinions that are produced by the adulterated reason are diverse and mutually conflicting. By acting in accordance with those opinions the incarcerated *jīva* earns only the bondage of ignorance as the fruit of such procedure.

Adulterated reason owes its origin to the operation of matter. The material picture which the individual soul, imprisoned in matter, receives in the first instance by means of the senses, is carried to the brain by the nervous process. The reason then goes to work on these pictures that are preserved in the brain by the process of memory. This activity gives rise to various concoctions and abstractions. The term 'scientific knowledge' is applied to the beauty that is perceived by the assortment of those pictures. By the processes of analysis and synthesis those pictures are made

to yield hues in the form of secondary conclusions. This is called reasoning. Comte said, "Assort that which has been observed and from it investigate the truth".

Let us now consider whether the reason which is brought to bear on the pictures that have been obtained originally and exclusively from the material world can be designated as reason born of matter. How is one to know about super-material objects and their qualities through this process? If there happens to exist any super-material entity there must, therefore, also necessarily exist for the realisation of the same some process that is suitable for such purpose. That those who are not acquainted with this higher process, or do not like to be acquainted with it due to prejudice, adopting the reason that is based on matter, will speak the language of delirium, admits of no doubt. In those cases in which the investigation of the material world happens to be the sole endeavour the reason that stands on matter yields the best results. This adulterated reason is specially effective in all forms of material affairs such as arts, bodily activities, warfare, music, etc., etc. In the first place adulterated reason in alliance with empiric knowledge, arrives at certain decisions and subsequently joining hands with fruitive work completes them by carrying them out in practice. When the affair of the railway was first settled in the mind of a materialist scholar, his reason was at that time alloyed with empiric knowledge. When it was reduced to practice the reason becoming imbued with fruitive work applied itself to the work of manufacture. Works such as the industries, etc., are as a matter of fact the proper subject of the adulterated reason. Super-material entities are not its legitimate subject and, therefore, its application to them is not practicable. Super-material reason is in a position to act only in the case of super-material entities. Materialism, the theory of material force, material extinctionism, idealism,—all these systems, adopting the reason that is dependent on matter for the purpose of investigating the cause of the world which happens to be super-material, could necessarily obtain no satisfaction. This was so because the process they adopted for the purpose happened to be quite ridiculous. All the books that have been written by them are, therefore, merely the meaningless utterances of delirious persons.

Although the real reason happens to be the natural faculty of the soul yet the soul that is encased in matter, under the heavy pressure of the load of matter for making it the exclusive subject of his contemplation, shows greater honour to adulterated reason. Hence most people of this world are upholders of the mixed reason. The super-material unalloyed reason is very rare. Those alone who through good fortune are actively disposed to serve the introspective faculty, are acquainted with the greatness of pure reason or spontaneous exclusiveness (*sahaja samādhi*). From a remote antiquity the world with a superficial vision paying honour to adulterated reason, had been hoping to obtain from itself its own realisation. All the different views which were propounded by such reason, although they are at first accepted by it with cordiality, prove unsatisfactory to itself in the long run. But the reason even when it is limited or mixed, cannot be without relation to the soul. At times it tries to do good to the soul. When after having brought forth the long series of heterogeneous views and talked deliriously in many different ways the adulterated reason could obtain no satisfaction it developed a feeling of contempt for itself. It began to cry deliriously. It said, 'Alas, how am I abandoning my nature by straying far away from the soul to whom I am eternally joined, having been occupied in such superficial activities!' Lamenting in this way, weighed down with fear, it admits, when it happens to be on its last legs, God as the Source of all activities. At this stage the human mind proclaims to all countries that God is realisable by the adulterated reason. In this mood Udayanā-chārya wrote his work, the *Kusumānjali*. In England the opinions that are promulgated under the names of Deism and Natural Theology should be recognized as meeting the approval of those people who profess those opinions by reason of their being in the above-mentioned condition. The theistic principle that is established by the process of adulterated reasoning, is extremely imperfect and, in regard to the reality, is both foreign and incomplete; because the theistic conception that is brought about by reason in alliance with matter, is a specific and limited idea, *viz.*, that God is the mere cause of matter. It is artificial in as much as there is in it no real advancement towards the spiritual state proper, no

direct activity of the soul nor any investigation of the Reality. This will appear later in its proper place.

Such delirious mixed reason, even after admitting God, is unable to establish the unity of God on account of materialistic errors. Sometimes it supposes God to be a dual entity. Thereupon in their judgment the spiritual principle appears as one god and the material principle as another god. The god, whose nature is imagined to be spiritual, is supposed to be the source of good. The god as the material principle, is opined as the cause of all evil. A certain scholar who bore the name of Jaradvastra, in his work the Zendavesta, admitted the dual nature of the divine principle in recognition of the eternity of the two gods, as the evil and the good principle respectively. Theistically disposed persons showed their contempt for him by designating him as the rotten interpreter (*jaran-mimānsaka*). This designation is retained even to this day, having been applied subsequently in connection with all superficial persons of the schools of fruitive work and empiric knowledge. Jaradvastra is an ancient scholar. His view received no support in India but spread successfully in Iran. Becoming infective his view produced, in the religion of the Jews and subsequently among the followers of the *Korān*, Satan as the rival of God. About the time when Jaradvastra was preaching his view of two gods, the necessity for three gods being recognised among the Jews the doctrine of the Trinity was originated. In the Trinitarian view at first the three gods were conceived as separate from one another; and subsequently, when this appeared unsatisfactory to the scholars, they elicited the inter-connection among them by the elaboration of the theological principles represented by God, the Holy Ghost and Christ respectively. In the particular Age or Sect in which Brahmā, Vishnu and Siva are conceived as different gods the unsatisfactory circumstance of similar belief in three gods occurred also in India. Scholars having established the theoretical unity of those three gods, have incorporated in many parts of the Shāstras advice discountenancing their separate existence. In different countries there is also found to exist belief in many gods. Specially in very backward countries monothism in a pure form is not found to prevail. At one time it was the practice to regard the gods, such as Indra, Chandra, Vāyu, Varuna, etc., as mutually

independent. The school of the *mimānsakas* (interpretationists) correcting the above view subsequently established a single god, *viz.*, *Brahma*. All this is mere delirious utterances of reason deluded by matter. God is one entity. Had He been more than one the world would have never functioned in a beautiful manner. Different laws in conformity with different wills in mutual conflict, would have undoubtedly wrecked the world. That this visible universe has issued from the will of one powerful person, cannot be denied by any person who feels the impulse of goodness.

The reasoning that is generated by the spontaneous cognition of the soul, is alone pure and free from defect. The Truth that is elucidated by such reasoning, is alone real. Reasoning can have no existence apart from instinctive knowledge. The reasoning associated with the knowledge of external Nature, that is noticed in the affairs of this world, is impure or mixed. The truths that are declared by the mixed reason, are all of a trivial character. Even if it establishes God its argument is never satisfactory. There is no applicability of the pervert reason to the case of the Absolute Truth. All conclusions regarding the Absolute reached by the pure reason on the basis provided by intuitive knowledge, are true. It may be asked in this connection what intuitive knowledge is. The soul is self-conscious and is, therefore, all-knowledge. The knowledge that naturally exists in the soul is spontaneous or intuitive knowledge. Intuitive knowledge is eternally cognate to the soul. It is not produced by any process of material experience. Pure reasoning is the name for a certain process of such intuitive knowledge. Intuitive knowledge is ascertainable by the fact that the *jīva* has the following realization from before the generation of any experience of the material world, *viz.* :—

- (1) *I exist.*
- (2) *I shall continue to exist.*
- (3) *I have joy.*
- (4) *There is a great entity that underlies and maintains my joy.*
- (5) *It is my nature to depend on the support of this entity.*
- (6) *I am eternally guided by this entity.*

- (7) *This support is extremely beautiful.*
- (8) *I have no power of abandoning this support.*
- (9) *My present state is lamentable.*
- (10) *I ought to follow again my guide and support, giving up this miserable condition.*
- (11) *This world is not my eternal dwelling-place.*
- (12) *By the progress of this world my eternal improvement is not secured.*

Unless the reason adopts such intuitive knowledge it merely continues to wander deliriously. There also exist certain axiomatic truths in the domain of spiritual science. No spiritual progress is possible unless these are accepted and followed.

There is a certain class of people who cannot form a settled opinion of their own after accepting pure intuitive knowledge and yet do not trust reason in all cases. Admitting intuitive knowledge to a certain extent they recognize oneness of God. Absorbed in knowledge they attain the exclusive state. But this exclusiveness is not the natural state of *samādhi* in as much as it exhibits abstruseness of thought. By such abstruse thinking even after piercing through this gross world they fail to obtain the vision of the spiritual world because the natural Truth does not manifest Himself without spontaneous exclusiveness. Having observed the symbolic world they feel as if they have seen the ultimate abiding-place of the *jiva*. In reality they only stand on the symbol of the material world. The difference between the symbolic world and material world consists in this that the material world is apprehensible by the senses. The symbolic world is apprehensible by the mind. The symbolic world is merely the subtle initial stage of the material world. The material world is of two kinds, *viz.*, (1) the very gross material world, and (2) the subtler world full of light. The astral body that the Theosophists talk about, is the lighted material body. The symbolic body is subtler than the astral; that is to say, it is mental. The subtle world that is full of the manifestations of power, according to the *Patanjala Shāstra* and the opinion of Buddhist ascetics, is the symbolic world. The spiritual entity is different from these. The non-alternative (*kaivalya*) state described in the *Patanjala*

Shāstra, is merely the idea of the state that is the opposite of the gross and the subtle, but shows no trace of any investigation of the spiritual Truth. No one can say what the relation of God-head is to the jiva after his attainment of the non-alternative state (*kaivalya*), or about the whereabouts or the nature of God in the non-alternative (*kaivalya*) state, although a god is met with during the pre-realization stage of such endeavour. If the jiva on attainment of the non-alternative state (*kaivalya*) merge with God then as a matter of fact it is monism. The *Yogashāstra*, whether it is Theosophy or Patanjali, is not for the eternal benefit of jiva. *Yogashāstra* is one of the numerous blind lanes that are found to exist between the grossest materialism at one end and spiritual Truth at the other. And, therefore, it yields no satisfaction to the jiva who is in quest of spiritual bliss.

Some hold that God has made this world for our enjoyment. We obtain the grace of God by religious merit earned in course of sinless enjoyment of this world. It may be objected to this that if this world had been made for yielding happiness to the jiva, God would not make it so imperfect. God has to be blamed for making it so imperfect if we assume that this world was intended by Him for our happiness. If His purpose in creating the world had been to teach us to be religious it would undoubtedly have been made differently. Because at present all persons of this world cannot attain to religion.

Holders of the opposite view say that this world is intended for the punishment of the jiva for offence committed by him. Being unable to find an adequate answer to the question how the jiva could commit offence a certain explanation has found a place in several religious systems to the following effect. God having created the first jiva permitted him to live in a pleasant wood in company of his wife. He forbade them to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. The first parents of mankind by the advice of a certain fallen jiva having eaten the forbidden fruit, were expelled from the happy region for the offence of disobedience to God and fell into this world which is so full of misery. For this offence of the first parents all these jivas were born sinful. As the offence could not be expiated by the jivas themselves a certain

being, who is like one limb of God, being born among men in the likeness of man, chose to suffer death by taking upon his own shoulders the sin of all jivas, who would follow him. Those jivas who followed him thereby easily earned their deliverance while those who did not follow him were cast into the eternal hell. It is not possible to comprehend with the normal understanding how other jivas can be excused by the punishment of God becoming jiva.

According to the above the jiva exists as jiva from birth to death. The jiva, therefore, did not exist before birth and, after death also, the jiva would have no existence in this sphere of his work. Moreover man alone is meant by jiva. Jiva cannot in the circumstances be a spiritual principle. He is to be conceived as created in matter by accident or by the will of God. Why the jiva appears in different periods and in different circumstances, is not understood. Why should not other animals be counted among the jivas? Why should birds and beasts be anterior to man? It is incomprehensible to those who obey God how it can be the dispensation of God, Who is full of mercy, that man should earn eternal heaven or suffer eternal damnation merely for his acts done in a single birth.

Those who belong to this School cannot serve God in an unselfish way. They cultivate the arts and sciences under the belief that God can be pleased by one's attempt to improve the world. But they remain ever ignorant of pure devotion to God which is free from all impulses of worldly work and knowledge. The service of God from a sense of duty can never be disinterested or natural. That we shall serve God because He has been merciful to us, is a mean conception, because it implies that we would not have served Him if He had not been kind to us. We also cherish the immoral hope of future favours. If God were considered as merciful for His bestowal of devotion it would not have been objectionable in any way. In these religions such a statement is not to be found. The mercy of God in this case only refers to the conveniences and happiness incidental to the worldly life.

In this and other analogous creeds of a recent origin God is formless and all-pervasive. The pursuit of knowledge is the chief work of such systems. The consideration arising from empiric knowledge that God is lowered if considered to have a form, constantly troubles their minds. God, according to this view, must be formless and all-pervasive because we have created Him such by our knowledge and He cannot be anything else than this. This conception of God degenerates into a form of idolatry that is straitly circumscribed by materialistic considerations. The sky that is found in matter is also all-pervasive and formless. The God of this School is like it. This is matter-worship. The expressions used in the prayers and hymns of praise, which are the only forms of worship in these creeds, are also altogether worldly. Those who hold this view are generally self-sufficient. They keep aloof even from good preceptors through fear lest such association may impart superstitions. Some even hold that as the truth is inherent in the soul it can be realised by one's own independent efforts, and that, therefore, there is no necessity for submission to a preceptor. Some opine that it is sufficient to accept the supreme Teacher. God is the supreme Preceptor and Saviour. He destroys our sinful tendencies by entering into our proper selves. There is no necessity for any human preceptor. Some of them regard as God-given a certain book which is a compilation from different sources. Others do not admit the authority of any book through fear lest by recognising the authority of any Scriptures errors are admitted.

Although according to this view only there is only one God yet it is in many parts inconsistent, full of insinuations of partiality against God and of no value to jivas who are naturally disposed towards God. Instead of admitting a principle of evil existing separately from God it considers the commission of sin as due to the weakness of jivas for which also, as this view offers no other explanation, God is tacitly held to be ultimately responsible. In the pride of empiric knowledge they fail to grasp the difference between soul and mind. Their spiritual science is stunted in its growth on account of arrogance engendered by their superior knowledge of the physical sciences. Their spiritual knowledge is so meagre that they cannot distinguish between the spiritual prin-

ciple and the material principle in gross and subtle forms. They accordingly mistake the symbolic for the spiritual.

From a long time a body of opinions bearing the name of *advaita-vāda* (monism) has been current in this country. This opinion is born of study of the Vedas under the lead of narrow partisan bias. Although monism has also been preached by many scholars outside India yet there seems to be little doubt that this view spread originally to other countries from India. A few savants who accompanied Alexander the Great into India, made the thorough acquaintance of it. This has been hinted by authors of Greece and Rome in their own works. According to *advaita-vāda* the Brahman is the only entity. There is not and has never been any second entity besides the Brahman. Distinctions such as spirit, matter and God are due to conventional judgment. As a matter of fact the Brahman is the unchanged cause of all cognisable principles. The Brahman is eternal, without change, without form and without differentiation. In the Brahman there is no adjunct, no kind of power and no kind of activity. There is no change of state or transformation of the Brahman. All these expressions are to be found in different parts of the Vedas. The professors of the monistic cult of the Brahman adopted these statements without any objection. But when they turned their eyes towards the differentiated world, they began to reflect how such Brahman can be the cause of the world. Whence came the world? Unless this was explained the view which appealed to their tastes could not be rendered tenable. Arrived at this point they began to think, and numerous issues were soon brought to light that clamoured for solution. How can activity or the active power be admitted to the Brahman which is without activity in any form? On the other hand caution was necessary lest monism suffered any curtailment by the admission of a second principle. Thinking on in this manner they first of all came to the conclusion that there would be no violation of the monistic principle if a slight power of transformation in the Brahman were admitted. The Brahman is the transformation of itself. This transformation is cognisable. Those monists who considered such admission as inconsistent with the monistic position, proposed to account for the world by the assumption of deception or illusion (*vivarta*)

due to want of true knowledge; just as a stick may be mistakenly supposed to be a snake. The world is unreal, a mere illusory idea. There is no world, no life. The Brahman exists and there also exists an illusion in the shape of the knowledge of the world. The names '*avidyā*' (nescience), '*māyā*' (illusion), etc., arose out of the effort to understand this deception thoroughly. A deception is never a real, separate entity. Therefore, there is no infringement of the conclusion of monism that the reality is only one. After this extraneous knowledge is subdued by the knowledge of the Reality the apparent illusion is destroyed with the realisation of one entity, resulting in emancipation (*mukti*). Yet another body of scholars refused to consider the theory of illusion as being altogether true. They said that the world is not a piece of self-evident deception. The illusion of the world owes its maintenance to another hallucination, viz., the *jīva* or individual soul. The *jīva* is not a separate entity from the *Brahman*. This would be an infringement of the monistic principle. The *jīva* is the real illusion. These scholars are divided into two groups. One of those held the view that the *Brahman* is like the great sky appearing as *jīva* due to limitation like the portion of the great sky enclosed within the pot. The other section thought this would be too great a tampering with the *Brahman*, and necessitate His subordination to illusion. Instead of doing this let the *jīva* be recognised as the reflection of the *Brahman* like the image of the moon in the water. Being itself a false entity full of a deceptive cognition in the way of the natural function of the principle of nescience the *jīva* soul imagines this world as made up of matter. In reality the *Brahman* is one and without a second. The *jīva* is not a separate entity. The world also is not anything that has a separate existence from the *Brahman*.

The great error of these scholars, which they can neither see nor want to see, is their assumption that the *Brahman* is only one admitting of the existence of no second entity, and that there is no other real thing separate from the *Brahman*. So long as the inconceivable power of the same *Brahman* is not admitted all the above speculations are bound to be trivial. Is the powerless *Brahman* proved to be one by the postulation of illusion by one, of 'nescience' by another, of 'deception' by a third and of 'the

deception of a deception' by yet another school? In all these views the abandonment of the monistic position is easily recognisable. The conception of the *Brahman* possessed of inconceivable power, is an infinitely greater idea than that of the powerless *Brahman*. Neither does the former necessitate the postulation of an entity foreign to the *Brahman* for the purpose of preserving His so-called unity. Monism fails utterly to comprehend and harmonize all the statements of the *Vedas* and is equally powerless to promote the good of the *jīva*. We take leave of the subject of monism with these general observations for the present, reserving the specific consideration of the details of its numerous variants in connection with the teaching of Mahāprabhu when He refutes the fallacies of this view.

All these are mere verbal juggleries or the mischievous prejudices of self-opinionated controversialists. The Truth exists buried in the midst of erroneous speculations. It is the office of the real investigator of Truth, on ascertaining the nature of the untruths, to discard them and by making the direct acquaintance with Truth to procure and treasure Him. Victor Cousin, the French savant, although he rightly hit the method, failed in its actual application, due to the fact that he employed himself in searching for the Absolute Truth in the piles of empiric learning. Such effort is like the endeavour to obtain the grain by the process of grinding the chaff. The real sifting has been done by Sree Vyasa Deva in his *Brahmasutra* and elaborated by himself in the *Sreemad Bhāgavatam*; and Sree Chaitanya Deva came into this world to make the religion set forth in the *Sreemad Bhāgavatam* possible of attainment by the fallen *jīva*.

Enough has been said on atheistic speculations to prove that they have always exercised, and still continue to exercise, consciously or unconsciously to their victims, a most pernicious influence on the human mind and prevent it from giving even a hearing to the subject of the Absolute Truth. It was so in the Age of Sree Chaitanya Deva. The South of India was the official stronghold of all kinds of warring doctrines and it was the purpose of Sree Chaitanya in travelling through the South to meet and refute the fallacies of the atheistical scholars of the different schools and thereby destroy their sinister influence which prevented

the general body of the people from giving their unprejudiced attention to His teaching.

The reader will get some idea of the chaotic state of religious opinion in India at the time of Sree Chaitanya Deva from the following brief sketch of the principal schools of philosophy whose views were more or less current in that Age. The more important of these have been compiled by Mādhwāchārya, a follower of Sankara's monism, who preceded Sree Chaitanya Deva by about two centuries, in his work the *Sarba-Darsana-Sangraha* which has been translated into English by E. B. Cowell. The systems mainly prevalent at the time of Sree Chaitanya Deva, may be arranged in the following order :—

(1) The system of Chārvāka, opposed to the Vedas, hankering for things other than God,—a devoted admirer of worldly qualities,—atheistical.

(2) The system of the Buddhists who hold everything as transitory, worship worldly qualities, are atheistical, rely on abstruse and fallacious argument.

(3) The system of the Jaina *arhats*, indeterminists, worship worldly qualities, rely on abstruse and fallacious argument.

(4) The system of Sāmkhya, godless, holds the soul as devoid of quality, relies on abstruse and fallacious argument.

(5) The system of Patanjala, acknowledges a god, holds the soul as devoid of quality, relies on abstruse and fallacious argument.

(6) The system of Sankara, averse to God, professing the aim of harmonizing conflicting opinions, pseudo-revelationist, pure monist, rationalistic.

(7) The system of the Baiākaranas, materialists, pseudo-revelationists, worship god conceived as possessed of worldly qualities.

(8) The system of the Mimānsakas, rely on the meaning of words, pseudo-revelationists, worship god who is conceived as possessing worldly qualities.

(9) The system of the Naiyāyikas, profess first beginning, process of effort and the unknown factor, recognise the authority

and validity of evidence other than that of the Word of the Veda, worship god conceived as possessing mundane qualities.

(10) The system of the Baisheshikas, profess first beginning, process of effort, the unknown factor, recognise no other authority than that of the Scriptures, worship god conceived as possessing mundane qualities.

(11) The system of the tranquilised Saivas, profess worldly enjoyment, process of effort, the unknown factor, emancipation while still living in this world, rationalistic, worship god conceived as possessing mundane qualities, believe in God.

(12) The system of the *Pratyabhijñas*, profess material enjoyment, process of effort, the unknown factor, hold emancipation on leaving the physical body, hold unity of the soul, worship god conceived as possessing mundane qualities.

(13) The system of the Nakulish Pāshupat Saivas, profess material enjoyment, process of effort, the unknown factor, hold souls to be separate, hold emancipation after leaving the body, believe in god as unrelated to fruitive work, worship god conceived as possessing mundane qualities.

(14) The system of the Saivas, profess material enjoyment, process of effort, the unknown factor, hold emancipation as a bodiless state, hold souls as separate, believe in god as related to fruitive work, worship god conceived as possessing mundane qualities.

Chārvāka—holds the living body as identical with the soul and its satisfaction as the object of life. Direct perception is the only proof of reality. The highest good consists in the pleasures produced by enjoyment of women, eating of wholesome food and wearing the best apparel, etc. The pain that is incidental to these pleasures, should be avoided as far as possible. But it would be foolish to forego the pleasure itself which is real for fear of the pain that may occasionally be associated with it. There is no after-life. Those eminently learned men who perform ceremonies enjoined by the Vedas at the cost of much wealth and physical discomfort are all deluded by the long-standing custom of obeying the Vedas, which were originally made by the hypocrite, the cunning knave and the cannibal taking counsel together. The Vedas are full of false, atrocious, immoral and ridiculous practices.

Buddhism.—The Buddhists are divided into four schools, *viz.*, the *Mādhyamikas*, the *Yogachāriyas*, the *Sautrāntikas* and the *Baibhāsikas* rendered by Cowell as Nihilists, Subjective Idealists, Representationists, and Presentationists, respectively. According to the first nothing exists except the void. In other words, nothing is really true. If anything had been really true it would have been constantly perceptible in the waking state, in sleep and in dream. According to the second external objects are non-existent. The soul which is only momentary cognition, is alone true. The third school holds that external objects are true and realisable by inference. According to the *Baibhāsikas* external objects are realisable by direct perception. According to all the schools the principal duty consists in worshipping this body by nourishing the twelve dimensions of which it is made, *viz.*, the five active organs, the five perceptual organs and the two perceptuo-volitional organs of the mind and the faculty of discrimination. According to the Buddhists '*Sugata*' is God, the world is momentarily perishable, direct perception and inference are the evidence; and misery, dimension, aggregate and the path are the four truths. The entity misery is constituted of its five limbs, *viz.*, knowledge, pain, cognition, impression and colour. The twelve dimensions have already been mentioned. The attachments and repugnances that arise spontaneously in the hearts of men, are called the principle of aggregation. The fixed persuasion that all impressions are momentary, bears the name of the path. *Moksha* or emancipation is identical with this last.

Jainism.—The general term of the sect is *arhat*. The Jains are that sect of the arhats that follows the teachings of the Jina. The arhats refute the theory of momentariness of the Buddhists and admit the continuity and eternal existence of the soul. The body is the measure of the *jīva*. The Arhat is God. He is omniscient and free from attachment, repugnance, etc. The three jewels are right view, right knowledge and right conduct. The right view consists of the right faith which is prevention of opposition or doubt regarding the truth declared by the Jina. The right knowledge consists of the knowledge of the truth declared by the Jina in a condensed or elaborate form. Right conduct consists in the abandonment of condemned activities. Right conduct

is of five kinds, viz., not to kill any *jīva* whether it is locomotive or stationary; not to accept more than is given, not to steal, to speak words that are true, beneficial and also agreeable, to give up lust, anger, etc., and to avoid undue attachment for all things. These five constitute the great obligation. The highest state is attained by practising these. They are 'syad-vādins', i.e., believe in the doctrine of relativity, indefiniteness or indeterminateness, as opposed to the idea of the absolute.

Sāṅkhyā.—The propounder of the Sāṅkhyā system of philosophy is Kapila. There are two Kapilas. Kapila, the son of Kardama and Devahuti, belongs to the *Satya Yuga*. He is the Kapila mentioned in the *Srīmad Bhāgavatam*. His view, which is also known as Sāṅkhyā, is recorded in the *Bhāgavatam*. It contains many statements that refer to the system of pure devotion. He must be carefully distinguished from Kapila, the propounder of the atheistical view of the current Sāṅkhyā philosophy which is our present subject. The atheist Kapila was born of the Agni-family in the *Treṭā Yuga*.

According to the Sāṅkhyā there are really two fundamental entities, viz., the *pradhāna* or *prakṛiti* (i.e., the material principle) and the *puruṣha* (i.e., the soul). *Prakṛiti* undergoes transformation. The *puruṣha* is an essence unaffected. The twenty-five entities of the Sāṅkhyā, from the enumeration of which the system derives its name, consist of primordial matter (*mula prakṛiti*), *mahat*, mistaken egoism (*ahamikāra*), the five subtle elements (*pañchatanmātrāḥ*), the five organs of sense, the five organs of action, the mind which is the organ of both sense and action, the five principles of gross matter and the soul (*puruṣha*). Of these the first is the pure essence of matter in the sense that it is not the effect of any other cause but is the cause of all the other material principles. The next groups in the series consisting of the seven categories from *mahat* to the five subtle elements, are related to one another as cause and effect each being the cause of the following entity. They are, therefore, both cause and effect. The five principles of gross matter are not the cause of any other entity. They are merely effect. Puruṣha or the soul is eternal and unchangeable. It is neither the cause nor the effect of anything.

Primordial matter (*prakriti*) is constituted of the three qualities, *viz.*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The state of equilibrium of these three qualities is *prakriti*. The qualities (*gunas*) are material and transformable. The whole world is the transformation of the qualities. The *sattva* quality is happiness itself, it is light and illuminating. Its function is equable (*sānta*). The *rajas* quality is made of misery and is active. Its function is terrible (*ghora*). The quality of *tamas* is stupefying, it is heavy and suppressive. Its function is irrational (*mūrha*). Although thus mutually opposed they co-operate with one another and thus produce the world. The world is thus full of pleasure, pain and ignorance. Pleasure and pain are the qualities of the principle of discrimination (*mahat* or *buddhi*), *i.e.*, of matter, and not of the soul. These qualities of the material intelligence are reflected in the soul. The soul is eternal, free from the material qualities, self-conscious, witness, active, different from matter and many in number. The material (*prakriti*) is the inactive principle, which is itself unconscious, but moving by the proximity of the soul. The soul is liberated when this relationship with the material principle is recognised by him. Such recognition leads the soul to dissociate himself from *prakriti*. This is the *summum bonum* and is called *mukti* or liberation.

Yoga.—This system was propounded by Patanjala *Muni*. It is also called theistic Sāṅkhya. It recognises in addition to the twenty-five entities of Sāṅkhya mentioned above a twenty-sixth entity, *viz.*, god. The *summum bonum* is called the non-alternative state (*kaivalya*) which is reached by the eight processes of *yoga* by which the activities of the mind are controlled and subdued. The worship of god helps the purification and tranquillisation of the mind. The system is very similar to Sāṅkhya, the chief differences being that it recognises the attainment of emancipation as dependent on the grace of god and also lays stress on the eight-fold *yoga* practices. On attainment of the state of freedom from any form of activity (*asamprajnāta samādhi* or *mukti*) misery finally disappears. This is the goal. It will be noticed that although the existence of God is admitted in the pre-non-alternative stages, He is only a secondary entity, the primary object being

the attainment of a desirable state for oneself which does not appear to be in any way related to God after it is realised.

The system of Sankara.—Sankara has tried to deduce the doctrine of pure monism from the *Brahma sutra* of Maharshi Veda-Vyasa. According to this system the *Brahman* alone is true, all else is untrue. The world perceived through the senses is an illusion like the mistaking of the rope for the snake. There is no difference between the individual soul and the highest Soul Who is the *Brahman*. It is similar to the Nihilistic school of Buddhism and has been considered to be a form of Buddhism under the garb of lip-loyalty to the Scriptures. Its *Brahman* is only a negation of the material world and has no definable nature of its own. The assertion that the nature of the *Brahman* is spiritual (*chit*) as distinct from unconscious matter (*achit*), differentiates it theoretically but not practically from the doctrine of 'Void' of the Buddhists. It commits material suicide in order to establish a spiritual void. It is an unnatural and forced interpretation of the philosophy of the *Brahma sutra* and has obtained wide currency in this country, being recognised by many foreign scholars as the representative philosophy of Hindu orthodoxy. It is less prevalent in the south than in the north of India. Pure monism which in its present form owes its origin to Sankara, has branched out into many slightly differing forms. It has already been referred to in another place and will be considered in its relation to the teaching of Sree Chaitanyadeva in its proper place.

'*The system of Baiākaranas.*—The Grammian Pānini is the propounder of the view that by the study of sound in the form of the letters of the alphabet and words formed of them the knowledge of the object to which they point is spontaneously realised as the result of such practice. Sound is of two kinds, eternal and transitory. The eternal sound is directly expressive of its object. The Grammarians recognise this directly expressive sound as the *Brahman*. They hold that by the study of the science of sound by the gradual subsidence of ignorance the state of emancipation is attained. It is considered as the easy, royal road among the ways that lead to emancipation (*moksha*).

The system of the Mimānsakas.—This was made by Maharshi Jaimini. The Word of the Scripture made by God out of pity for

the suffering of the *jīva*, is the only authority by following which the fruit in the form of happiness promised by it is attainable. This school undertakes to supply the true interpretation and to reconcile apparently conflicting statements of the Scriptures.

The system of the Naiyāyikas.—The view of Gautama, the promulgator of this system, may be thus put: there are sixteen categories consisting of processes by which the knowledge of the twelve entities can be obtained. By constant hearing, contemplation and revision of the knowledge thus gained the individual soul and the Over-soul become known. This leads to the disappearance of misery and with it of false knowledge and their resultant preferences, repugnances and stupefaction, etc. There is then left no inclination for virtuous or vicious acts. After this, on the termination of the sufferings by the system of bodies produced by the previously accumulated activities leading to rebirth, there is final cessation of the twenty-one kinds of misery due to the six sense-organs, the six objects of the senses, the six intellectual faculties and pleasure and pain. This is the attainment of happiness or *mukti*.

The system of the Vaisheshikas.—This system owes its origin to Maharshi Kanād or Uluka. The *summum bonum* according to this system is the final cessation of misery (*mukti*). This is the result of true knowledge which is obtained by a critical and careful study of the Scriptures and their constant consideration and meditation. It is necessary, first of all, to differentiate the soul from the non-soul or matter. This school holds that there is definite and eternal difference between the several permanent entities and also between the objects and their qualities, although the last two are eternally associated with each other. It is this peculiarity which gives its name to the system. The atom is the final limit of matter. The world, etc., made of material atoms, are eternal and any other worlds not so made are impermanent but eternal. The system closely resembles that of the Naiyāyikas.

Saivas.—According to this, Siva who is ever affectionate to His devotees is held to be god and the *jīvas* are designated as animals (*pashu*). God awards the fruit of actions in accordance with the nature of such acts. All action is followed by its appropriate effect and is, therefore, the cause of such effect. This does

not affect the freedom of action of god as the supreme lord and master. God is formless. There are three entities, *viz.*, the lord, the animal and the bond. Siva is the lord and those who have attained the state of Siva and the methods whereby this state is attained, *e.g.*, initiation, etc., form the lordly category. The *jīva*-soul is the animal. This *jīva*-soul is different from the body, is eternal and is capable of taking the initiative. The *jīva*-soul freed by Siva from sin is elevated to his proper lordly position and merges with the divinity.

The Pratyabhijnas.—According to this school the *jīva*-soul is the Over-soul. This is established by the inference that a being who has knowledge and power of independent action is god; that which has not those powers is non-god, *e.g.*, house, etc. The soul of *jīva* possesses the above powers and therefore it is god. This recognition of the identity of the *jīva*-soul with god is called Pratyabhijna. The acquisition of this knowledge is alone necessary for the highest realization, *viz.*, that Siva is the divinity.

Nakulish Pāshupat Saivas.—Siva is god. Being the ruler of *jivas*, Siva is also called Pashupati, *jīva* being named *pashu* (animal). God's will is the only cause of the world. The *summum bonum* (*mukti*) according to this view consists in the absolute cessation of all misery and the attainment of the state of the divinity. Specific acts are prescribed as the method to be followed for obtaining emancipation. It considers service of god as tantamount to bondage.

Saivas (Rasesvara or Mercurial school).—The *summum bonum* is the attainment of the state of the divinity. This is possible only through knowledge of god. But this knowledge is naturally and easily attainable in this material body if it is tranquilised by mercury. Siva is god. Mercury is Siva's own self. The body is the friend of the soul and can be rendered spiritual and eternal in the above way. Mercury is called “*pārada*” and “*rasesvara*” due to its qualities of enabling the *jīva* to get across the ocean of this world and being accordingly the supreme liquid.

All these and many other atheistical views have been prevalent in this country from most remote times. All these are empirical and try to work up to God, Who is necessarily conceived as some form of sublimated or discarded matter, by the

powers of the human mind working on the data supplied by the senses. Even in those cases where there is profession of obedience to the authority of the revealed Scriptures such admission is merely verbal and the method adopted is in every instance purely empirical, although help of the Scriptures is frequently sought in support of special views reached by the empiric process. In spite of the lip-profession of theism such method has consciously or unconsciously led in every case to the formulation of materialistic, unspiritual and godless systems. This, however, did not pass unchallenged. Or, it would be truer to say, that these views were really propounded in opposition to the theistic school which embodies the natural religion of the *jīva* and which has existed both potentially and in an explicit form from eternity.

It is in fact futile to seek for the origin of the eternal religion in history limited by space and time. It has always existed. Its continued existence can also no doubt be established as far back as our limited vision extends. All the other systems have a historical origin. The theistic (Vaishnava) religion has no historical origin and no beginning. The other systems have attained temporary prominence on account of the vigour of their attack on theism (*Vaishnavism*). We shall return to this subject again. For the present it would be sufficient to point out that theism in its true sense, which is identical with Vaishnavism, possesses the most numerous body of expounders and they have always been engaged in refuting the fallacies of the empiric schools. In the Iron Age (*Kali Yuga*) the Vaishnava religion has had four principal teachers after whom the four divisions (*sampradāyas*) of the community are named. Those four founder-Āchāryas of the respective *sampradāyas* in the chronological order of their appearance are,—Sreemad Ādi Vishnuśwāmi, Sreemad Nimbārka, Sreemad Rāmānuja and Sreemad Madhva. The Vaishnava Founder-Āchāryas are pure revelationists (*srauta panthis*) as opposed to the schools mentioned above who are empiricists. They hold devotion to Godhead Whose Nature is purely spiritual to be the *summum bonum*. This goal is reached by obeying the Scriptures by submitting to receive the Word of Godhead from *sādhus* who alone understand their true import. This submission must also be complete.

But although the four Vaishnava Founder-Āchāryas, who preceded Sree Chaitanyadeva, and their followers certainly prepared the ground for the general re-establishment of pure theism their efforts only led their opponents to endless shifting of position and re-statement of their views and this was done with so much vigour and success that at the time of the advent of Sree Chaitanyadeva the country had passed almost completely into the hands of the atheists as will appear from the incomplete list of the principal atheistic schools that were flourishing in His time which has been put before the reader in the above brief account. Sree Chaitanyadeva was opposed by all of these and He had to meet their leaders in learned disputations. The school which was most hostile to Hīmī was that of the *smārtas* who do not admit the transcendence of Vishnu and His devotees but hold Vishnu to be a god of equal status with the other gods and endowed with specific powers. The *smārtas* are frankly polytheistic and follow fruitive activities for the reward of material happiness promised by the Scriptures for their performance. The purely spiritual religion preached by Sree Chaitanyadeva was, therefore, utterly incomprehensible and repugnant to the doctrines and practices of the *smārtas*.

Sree Chaitanyadeva also had occasion to engage in controversy with Chānd Kāzi who believed in the doctrine of impersonal Godhead, and so thoroughly convinced him that it is not the teaching of the *Korān* that he turned out to be one of His staunchest supporters.

The followers of the Vaishnava Founder-Āchāryas had also succumbed to the seduction of the other schools and Sree Chaitanyadeva had to meet in controversy the leaders of pseudo-Vaishnava factions who were in revolt against the authority of their own Āchāryas. He opposed the Rāmananda sect who called themselves the followers of Rāmānuja but favoured salvationism, and the *tattvavādins*, professing to belong to the Madhva school, for a similar reason. He did not esteem the views of Ballava Āchārya who, professing to follow Vishnuswāmi, differed from Sridhar, the commentator of the *Sreemad Bhāgavatam*, also belonging to the same *sampradāya*. The *sampradāya* founded by Nimbārkachārya has so utterly neglected its original Āchārya that his works and those of his proximate successors appear to be lost.

Sree Chaitanyadeva rescued the teachings of the great Āchāryas in the process of perfecting them and demonstrated the relation of harmony in which their systems stand to the full Truth. But before we finally plunge into the consideration of the religion taught and practised by Sree Chaitanyadeva the issue will be simplified if we stop for a short time to take a passing glance at the views of the four great Vaishnava Founder-Āchāryas who preceded Sree Chaitanya and kept the dim lamp of theistic scholarship burning which was to be merged in the Sunrise of Advent of the Supreme Lord Himself as Teacher of His Word.

VI. HISTORY OF THEISM

THERE is a certain class of people who have the temerity to regard the religion preached by Sree Chaitanyadeva as of recent origin and an original and new conception. The fact, however, is quite otherwise. It is no other than Sree Chaitanya Whom all the Scriptures of every Age and country have been eager to proclaim but have failed to adequately express. The Truth Who is no other than Sree Chaitanyadeva Himself, is the Same Who manifested Himself in the heart of Brahmā at the beginning of material creation. The Word, Who, beginning with Brahmā, made Himself manifest to a succession of persons, was gradually confused in many ways by the influence of time. The Absolute Truth made available by Brahmā in the form of the Word although He appeared in subsequent times in the community of the Rishis being handed down by the process of verbal transmission to the ear from preceptor to disciple has been variously transformed due to the intrusion, into the process, of the triple qualities of this material world. At those periods when the perverted version of the communication manifested to the ear threatens to completely mask and distort the real Truth that Lord Vishnu the Divine Personality Himself Who is both Source and the first Link in the chain of the line of preceptorial succession through whom the Divine Logos manifests Himself as articulated Sound to the ear, causes the Appearance of Himself in this world in different Forms in conformity with particular lines of activities appropriate for the particular requirements of the times. These Plenary Divine Manifestations constitute the series of the *Leelā-Avatāras* of Vishnu.

In this manner Truth manifested Himself successively in different forms in the seven different lives of Brahmā. The first four births of Brahmā took place during the Age of Truth (*Satya Yuga*), the first of the four *Yugas* that form a complete cycle of the Ages. In the first birth of Brahmā, which was mental, the

Fenapas learnt the Absolute Truth from Sree Nārāyana. From *Fenapas* He was heard by the *Baikhānasas* and from them by Chandra. In Brahmā's second birth, which was ocular, by the grace of Nārāyana, Brahmā and Rudra and, from Rudra, the *Bāla-khilyas* attained to the Truth. In the third birth of Brahmā, which was oral, from Nārāyana, Suparna received the super-mental root-formula (*mantram*) of the Rig Veda. At the same time the *Bighashāsi sampradāya* obtained the same from Vāyu and from the *Bighashāsis*, Mahodadhi received the experience of the exclusive spiritual function. In the fourth auricular birth of Brahmā the eternal function (*sātvata dharma*) was promulgated in the Vedas along with the *Āranyakas*. At this time from Brahmā, Svārochisha Manu, from him, his son Samkhapada and, from Samkhapada, Subarnābha Manu, the son of Samkhapada, learnt the eternal function (*sātvata dharma*). In the Age of Truth the religion was thus spread by the fourfold manifestation in the form of the mental, ocular, oral and auricular births of Brahmā.

At this time there had not yet begun the promulgation of the *varnāshrama dharma* of the Vedic *Karmakānda* which was instituted in the next Age, viz., the *Tretā Yuga*. Fenapa, Baikhānasa, Soma, Rudra, Bālakhilya, Suparna, Vāyu, Mahodadhi, Svārochisha Manu, Samkhapada, Subarnābha and other devotees of Hari of this pre-historic age, all belonged to the 'one-path' branch (the *Ekāyana Sākhā*) of the Vedic Tree. At that time there being yet no divisions of the Vedic School the Vedic Rishis are designated as having belonged to the one-path branch. Fenapa, Baikhānasa, Bālakhilya and later the Auḍumbaras, in accordance with the four pre-historic divisions, formed a separate branch of those belonging to the *vānaprastha* stage even as early as the time when the *varnāshrama dharma* was established. The *varnāshrama dharma*, a classification of society into a fourfold division according to the two-fold principle of quality and work, was introduced at the beginning of the Second Age (*Tretā*) to which also belong three additional births of Brahmā. At the beginning of the *Tretā* Age in the fifth *nāsatya* birth of Brahmā from Nārāyana, Sanat Kumāra received admission into the one-path religion. By Sanat Kumāra, Birona, by Birona, Raibhya, by Raibhya, Kukshi were successively admitted into the same one-path religion (*aikāntika dharma*). While in

the sixth birth of Brahmā from the egg, from Brahmā, Barhisat and his elder brother Abikampana, etc., obtained entry into the one-path eternal religion. The chant of the Sāma Veda first appeared in this sixth birth of Brahmā. It is in the seventh birth of Brahmā from the lotus that, from Nārāyana, Brahmā, from Brahmā, Dakshya, Āditya, Bibasvān, Manu and Ikshvāku, etc., being established in the Bhāgavata religion, attained to great fame.

The Sree community (*sampradāya*) sprang from Ratnākara. Ratnākara obtained the religion from the ancient *Bighashāsi* community and this last again from Vāyu who belonged to the time of the third oral birth of Brahmā. The Brahma and Rudra communities received the mercy of Sree Nārāyana in the fourth ocular birth of Brahmā. Their successors, the *Bālakhilyas*, maintained the lines of Brahmā and Rudra. Sanat Kumāra received the one-path religion from Sree Nārāyana in the fifth nāsatya (nasal) birth of Brahmā.

The activities of the series of the Plenary Divine Manifestations of this world (*Avatāras*) of the lotus period, are narrated in the Scriptures. The practices of the different communities of the eternal religion who accepted the ten Appearances in this world of Vishnu in the Forms of Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man-Lion, Dwarf, Rāma son of Bhṛigu, Rāma son of Dasaratha, Baladeva, Buddha and Kalki as their Objects of worship, are recorded in such works as the *Purānas*, the *Mahābhārata*, etc. Although these books happen to be written in Sanskrit we notice in them mention of the eternal (*sātvata*) religion of the pre-historic Age in the form of hints and also in the shape of a certain amount of descriptive matter. The worshippers of the Divinity in the Forms of His ten *Avatāras* have acquired the designations of '*bhakta*' (devotee), '*bhāgavata*' (godly) or '*sātvata*' (eternal).

Wherever there arises the consciousness of transitory, changeable, finite time and of mundane personality conformably to our worldly judgment there appear two qualitative manifestations of the Godhead, Who are also classed in the category of Divinity. Although the transcendental knowledge is always manifest in the heart of Brahmā, among his successors, due to their sensuous pre-dilections, various temporary experiences have been wrongly assigned to the category of the eternal Truth. Whence there are

to be found in this world in regard to Godhead a great variety of mutually conflicting views. We find accordingly at different places the cults of the village-god, of ghosts, mesmerism, the process of *pancha-pakshi*, the cult of the followers of energy, immersed in the enjoyment of the five pleasures making for a material objective, the creed of the worshippers of the Sun imbued with a mixture of cognitive and active qualities and the system of the worshippers of Ganapati, a product of the cognitive in association with numbing qualities. These cults setting themselves up as its rivals have been trying by their loud clamours to disturb the eternal religion. The desire of his successors for other things than the spiritual service of Godhead by disregarding the method of service of the Transcendental that had appeared in the mind of Brahmā, drove them into the paths of fruitive work and empiricism of the elevationists and the liberationists respectively. These temporarily excited mental tendencies are checked by the power of Rudra who is adored by the (material) negative or nihilistic quality. The various faces of Brahmā, the *Avatāra* in active quality of the Transcendental Vishnu in this material world, have been imagined, synthetised and made manifest by persons possessed of corresponding natures and, up to the time when those active tendencies are not absorbed in the negative, the worship of qualified Vishnu manifests its potency in this phenomenal world. As a matter of fact the conceptions of qualified and non-qualified worship are correlatives in the mundane apprehension.

Sree Chaitanyadeva occupying the seat of the world-Teacher, has uprooted many kinds of perverse and abstruse speculations of the stubborn race of sophists. The contemplation of Vishnu in the Age of Truth, the sacrifice for Vishnu in the following Age (*Tretā*), the ritualistic worship of Vishnu in the third (*Dvāpara*) Age, and the chanting (*kirtana*) of the Name of Godhead in the fourth (*Kali*) Age, are specially suitable for the bound *jīva* for the attainment of the Sight of Godhead and His service. But the eternal Scriptures (*sātvata shāstra*) declare that in the seventh regime of the lotus-born Brahmā the desire to establish the equality of the gods exercising delegated power, with Vishnu will continue to produce the delusion of the sojourners in the domain of fruitive works for the space of twenty-five hundred years. The belief that

the Feet-wash of Vishnu is only ordinary water will continue up to the five-thousandth year, the belief that Vishnu is the equal of the other gods of the hierarchy of gods will be accepted as certain truth by those journeying on the path of misfortune. The spiritual Scriptures (*sātvata shāstra*) say that despite hundreds of defects of *Kali*,—the fourth Age, it possesses one supremely redeeming feature, *viz.*, that in this Age the bound soul (*jīva*) obtains deliverance from the clutches of worldly judgment by listening to the chant (*kirtana*) instituted by Sree Gaursundar. The individual soul in the *Kali* Age is freed from the vagaries of conflicting views by the power of the chant (*kirtana*) of Krishna to the exclusion of the narrow consideration of the controversialists of the schools of empiric knowledge and fruitive works. It is for this reason that the writer of *Sree Chaitanya Charitāmrita* in the very beginning of that work, in the second chapter, has declared in the form of an emphatic glorification of the chant, the message of the super-mundane and all-pervasive mercy of Sree Chaitanyadeva. Those who follow Sree Chaitanyadeva are alone freed from the clutches of error by the abandonment of all evil association. Those who are so deluded as not to avail the mercy of Sree Chaitanya will remain confined to the worldly point of view within the narrow hole of error by the logic of the frog in the well. They will never obtain the privilege of being employed in the service of the Super-sensuous.

The following brief review of the historical development of the theistic thought will further elucidate the Scriptural position outlined above.

The pursuit of the *summum bonum* is the proper and natural function of the individual soul (*jīva*). The co-eternal associated existence of this eternal function with the soul since his appearance needs must be admitted. This natural function was at first latent and had the form of the conception of his own identity with the *Brahman* as the manifestation of himself. There was not yet any discussion of the bond of the highest love that united the two by the establishment of definite difference between the individual soul (*jīva*) and the *Brahman*. This religious doctrine of the intellectual realisation of the identity of the individual soul with the *Brahman*, continued to prevail for a long time. The Rishis tried

to find out the proper occupation of the soul by formulating from time to time various methods such as sacrifice (*yajna*), asceticism (*tapasyā*), *ijyā*, *sama*, *dama*, patience (*titikshā*), *dāna*, etc. A long period passed in this quest of a vocation in the domain of works essentially materialistic on abandonment of the thought, 'I am the *Brahman*'. When subsequently the reward attainable in the domain of fruitive works was judged to be trivial and harmful, the mind of the Aryas applied itself to the question of liberation (*moksha*). Sanaka, Sanātana and several others had altogether ignored the path pointed by desire for sensuous enjoyment. But Prajāpati, Manu and Indra and other *devas* hoped to please God-head by sacrifices (*yajna*) leading to worldly improvement. In regard to the fruit of such activities the ideas of heaven and hell were conceived to be final. The pure essence of the soul and the quest for emancipation and final attainment of the highest satisfaction, none of these were at all realized. In the *Sreemad Bhāgavatam* is found an exhaustive discussion of these three subjects and the conclusions are clearly stated.

The most merciful Sree Rāmānujāchārya, the disciple of the illustrious Sathakopa, was the first to bring together the fundamentals of the Vaishnava thought. Some time before him Sankarāchārya by his commentary of the *Vedānta sutra* gave such a strong impetus to the pursuit of the empiric knowledge that the goddess of devotion was taken by surprise and was checked and remained for a long time hid inside the hearts of her devotees. Sankarāchārya cannot be held to be responsible for this untoward result. Far from blaming him we should rather regard him as the ideal of a patriot because there was in that Age a special reason for undertaking such a task for the indirect service of the Truth. It is well known that a great person bearing the name of Gautama who was sprung from the Sākya clan of Kapilāvastu five hundred years before Christ instituted such a vigorous movement of empiric knowledge that in consequence of it the previously established system of *varṇāshrama dharma* was in imminent danger of being wholly obliterated. The Buddhist religion preached by Gautama became a thorn in the side of the whole ancient inheritance of the Aryas. Buddhism soon spread beyond the Punjab, under the patronage of kings such as Kanishka, Huvishka, Vāsudeva, etc.,

of the Scythian dynasty, into the trans-Himālayan regions of Tibet, Tartary, China and other countries. In another direction the Buddhist religion was firmly implanted in Burma, Ceylon and many other places by the efforts of Emperors like Asokavardhana, etc. The ancient holy places (*tirthas*) of the Āryas were changed into centres of Buddhism and became almost wholly Buddhistic in outward appearance. It even appeared possible that all traces of the religion of the Brāhmaṇas might be destroyed. When this undesirable disturbance assumed the most dangerous proportions, in the seventh century of the Christian era, the Brāhmaṇas becoming furiously indignant began a steady and organised attempt for the destruction of Buddhism. In this crisis Sreemad Sankarāchārya eventually became the leader of the Brāhmaṇas with their headquarters at Benares.

From the early Christian epoch onwards the vigour and keenness of intellect that is found in the south of India, is not so much in evidence in other parts of the country. From this time there arose in the southern firmament, like stars of the first magnitude, such extraordinary personalities as those of Sankara, Sathakopa, Yamunāchārya, Rāmānuja, Vishnuswāmi and Madhvāchārya and a host of eminent scholars. Sankarāchārya failing to achieve much success with the help of his Brāhmaṇised following, having adopted the ten orders of *sannyāsins* bearing the designations of Giri, Puri, Bhārati, etc., winning over the Brāhmaṇas fond of materialistic activities, by the physical and controversial prowess of those *sannyāsins*, set about to effect the destruction of the Buddhists. In those places where he failed to bring over the Buddhists to his side Sankara did not scruple to obtain even the assistance of the *Nāgā sannyāsins* for his purpose. And, finally, by the compilation of the commentary of the *Vedānta sutra*, by mixing up therein the doctrine of fruitive works of the Brāhmaṇas with the principle of empiric knowledge of the Buddhists, he effected the unification of the views of Brāhmaṇas and Buddhists. After this he changed the names of the Buddhist shrines and idols and made them conform to the religion of the *Vedas*. The Buddhists, partly through fear of violence and partly in view of the partial retention of their own creed, submitted to the Brāhmaṇas from necessity. Those Buddhists to whom such a procedure

appeared to be hateful fled either to Burma or Ceylon, carrying with them the relics of Buddha. It was at this time that the Buddhist pandits made their way to Ceylon from Puri with the tooth-relic of the Buddha Avatāra. In the fifth century A.D. the Chinese savant Fa Hian visiting Puri wrote with great joy that in that place Buddhism existed in an unalloyed form and there was no oppression by the Brāhmaṇas. Subsequently, after the change noticed above in the seventh century A.D., the next Chinese scholar Hiuen Tsang wrote from Puri that the tooth of Buddha had been carried to Ceylon and the holy place had been utterly desecrated by the Brāhmaṇas.

On a consideration of these events the activities of Sankara would appear to be really wonderful. By divesting the country of the nomenclature of Buddhism, he effected to a certain extent the welfare of India in the national sense in as much as it prevented the further attenuation of the old society of the Āryas, a process which had been in progress. Especially did he change the mentality of the Āryas by introducing into Aryan books the controversial method. The impetus which was thus imparted by him enabled the Aryan intellect to investigate even subjects the consideration of which had been hitherto unattempted by them. By the force of the controversial current of Sankara, the flower of devotion, afloat on the stream of the mind of the devotee, was in a state of flutter. But Rāmānujāchārya, by the vigour of argumentation imparted by Sankara and by the grace of God, by composition of a fresh commentary of the *Vedānta sutra*, resuscitated the vigour of the Vaishnava thought. Within a short time Vishnuswāmi III, Nimbāditya and Madhvavaswāmi, establishing the Vaishnava view in slightly different forms, also wrote commentaries of the *Brahma sutra* in accordance with their respective opinions. All of them after the manner of Sankarāchārya, wrote a commentary on the *Geetā*, a *bhāshya* of the thousand Names and a commentary on the *Upanishads*. From this time the opinion, viz., that for the recognition of a school it was necessary for it to possess its own commentaries on the four aforesaid books, established its hold on the minds of the people. From the above four Vaishnava Āchāryas the four current schools of Vaishnavism,

viz., those of Sree, Brahmā, Rudra and Sanaka, have had their historical origin.

Sree Chaitanya appeared at Nabadwip in the fifteenth century of the Christian era. At first as house-holder and subsequently as *sannyāsin* Sree Chaitanya elaborated the full knowledge of the two ultimate principles of the Vaishnava religion. That the real significance of the land of Gauḍa (Bengal) is attainable with difficulty even by the *devas*, admits of no doubt by the testimony of the Scriptures. Appearing in this chosen land, the Darling of Sachi Devi, the Most Highly Revered of the Vaishnavas, has given away freely to all the people the boundless wealth of spiritual Truth, that can be compared with nothing else. This is well known to all persons. By rare good fortune it has chanced that we have been born in this unique land. For a long time to come those Vaishnavas who will appear in this land, will also regard themselves glorified by such birth as we have obtained.

Sree Chaitanya, with the help of Nityānanda and Advaita, encompassed by Rupa, Sanātana, Jiva, Gopāla Bhatta, the two Raghunāthas, Rāmānanda, Svarupa, Sārbabhauma, etc., has expounded clearly the true relationship of the individual soul (*jīva*) with Godhead, has shortened our work in regard to spiritual method by demonstrating the superiority of chanting the Name (*Kirtana*), and, in regard to the goal of spiritual endeavour, has laid down the extremely simple end of lasting mellowing quality (*rasa*) to be met with on the Path of complete spiritual endeavour (*Braja*).

The reader will find, if he considers the subject with special care, that the principle of the *summum bonum* has been steadily gaining in clearness, simplicity and consciousness from primitive times on to the present day in proportion as all impurities, deposited by Age and clime, are being expelled, and its beauty, waxing in brilliancy, is appearing within the ken of our direct view. The Highest Object of spiritual endeavour first appeared on the soil, overgrown with the *kusa* grass, on the bank of the Sarasvati. Slowly gathering strength it played out its childish pastimes on the ice-bound settlement of Badarikāsrama. Its adolescence was nursed in the forest land of Nimisha on the bank of the Gomati. Its youthful activities are observed in the Drāviḍa country on the beautiful bank of the Kāveri. The maturity is manifested to our

view on the bank of the stream of the Jāhnabi, that sanctifies the world, in the town of Nabadwip.

If we consider the history of the whole world we are confirmed in our view that the acme in the progressive quest of the *summum bonum*, has been reached at Nabadwip. The Supreme Soul is the only Object of the love of the plurality of separate individual souls (*jivas*). If the Supreme Soul, Who is the Integer, is not served with love, He can never be easy of access to the separate fractional souls. He is not easy of attainment even if He is constantly meditated upon by abandonment of all other attachments that bind individual souls to this world. He is captivated by a mellow quality (*rasa*) of the appropriate kind, and by leaving this out He cannot be obtained. This mellow quality (*rasa*) is of five specifications, *viz.*, (1) tranquil (*sānta*), (2) as of the servant (*dāsyā*), (3) as of the friend (*sakhya*), (4) as of parents (*bātsalyā*), and (5) as of the wife or mistress (*madhura*). The mellow quality whose specific characteristic is tranquillity is the one to appear initially by reference to the *Brahman*, or, in other words, it is equivalent to the merely continued existence of the fractional individual soul in the Greater Principle, on the cessation of the miseries due to the worldly connection. In this state, with the exception of a slight measure of negative bliss, there is no other freedom. At this stage there has not yet been established any reciprocal relationship of the spiritual novice with the Super-soul. The mellow quality characterised by servitude (*dāsyā rasa*) is the next in order of manifestation. It possesses all the treasures of tranquil mellowness (*sānta rasa*) and something more. This new factor is affection, *i.e.*, a sense that an object belongs to me (*mamatā*). In this specific quality (*rasa*) there is found relationship with Godhead which may be expressed thus, 'Godhead is my Master and I am His eternal servant'. However excellent a person may be in himself one does not feel any particular concern for him unless there exists also a definite personal relationship between him and oneself. Therefore the mellowness of personal servitude (*dāsyā rasa*) is very much superior to that of impersonal tranquillity (*sānta rasa*). As servitude (*dāsyā*) is superior to the state of perfect unconcern (*sānta*), so also is friendship (*sakhya*) very much superior to servitude (*dāsyā*). Because in

servitude (*dāsyā*) there is a thorn in the shape of distant reverence. But in friendship (*sakhya*) there is present a great jewel in the form of confidential relationship. Can there be any doubt that he is the greatest among servants who possesses the confidence and is, therefore, as it were, a friend, of his Master? In the mellowness of friendship (*sakhya rasa*) there are present all the values of the mellowness of unconcern and servitude (*sānta* and *dāsyā rasas*). Just as friendship (*sakhya*) is higher than servitude (*dāsyā*), in like manner parental affection (*bātsalya*) is superior to friendship (*sakhya*). This is self-evident. Of all friends the son is the most liked and is a source of far greater happiness. In the mellowness of parental affection (*bātsalya rasa*) the constituent values of all the four mellownesses (*rasas*) are combined. Although the mellowness of parental affection (*bātsalya rasa*) appears to be so superior to all the other mellow qualities (*rasas*), it appears very insignificant by the side of the mellowness of the sweetness of amorous love (*madhura rasa*). There are many things that have to be kept outside the relationship of parent and child, but not between husband and wife. Therefore, if the subject is very closely considered, all the preceding mellownesses (*rasas*) will be found to have attained their perfection in that of amorous love, as between husband and wife (*madhura rasa*).

If we consider the history of these five distinctive mellow qualities (*rasas*), it is clearly perceived that the mellowness of the tranquil state (*sānta rasa*), first appeared in this world in India. When the soul was not satisfied by sacrificial rites by means of material objects those who professed the doctrine of the highest spiritual good, such as Sanaka, Sanātana, Sananda, Sanatkumāra, Nārada, Mahādeva, etc., renouncing all attachment for the material world, experienced the mellowness of tranquillity (*sānta rasa*) by being thereby established in the Super-soul. Long after this the mellowness of servitorship (*dāsyā rasa*) appeared as in Hanumān, the ruler of the Kapis. The mellow quality of tranquil spiritual servitude (*dāsyā rasa*) spreading gradually, was most beautifully manifested in the south-western part of the continent of Asia in a great personage, viz., Moses. Uddhaba and Arjuna, who followed the king of the Kapis by a long interval, attained to the privilege of the mellowness of tranquil serving spiritual friendship

with Godhead (*sakhya rasa*) and preached it to the world. By slowly spreading to other countries this mellow quality of the love of a friend for Godhead touched the heart of a religious preacher of Arabia, Muhammad. The mellowness of parental affection (*bātsalya rasa*) appeared in India at intervals in different forms. Of this the variety of love for Godhead, as of a son for his father, but regarded as the most High and Mighty Ruler of the world (*aiswaryagata*), spreading beyond India, fully manifested itself in Jesus, the saviour of the Jews. The mellowness of amorous love (*madhura rasa*), on its first appearance, irradiated the region of Braja. The permeation of the heart of the individual soul under the thraldom of worldliness, by the mellowness of tranquil, serving, friendly, affectionate, amorous spiritual devotion to Godhead, is supremely difficult to attain, because it is confined only to specially elected and perfectly pure souls (*jivas*). The Moon of Nabadwip, Darling of Sachi, with His own associates, promulgated this most subtle of all mellownesses (*rasas*). The exquisite sweetness of this relationship with Godhead has not yet spread beyond India.

Not long ago a Western scholar, Newman, realising this mellowness (*rasa*) to a slight extent, gave publicity to it in England by writing a book on the subject. The nations of Europe and America have not up till now been satiated with the sweetness of their filial love for Godhead characterised by reverence, promulgated by Jesus. It is hoped that by the grace of Godhead and at no very distant date they will begin to taste of the wine of the mellowness of spiritual amour (*madhura rasa*), with even greater ardour. It will have appeared that a particular state of the mellow quality (*rasa*) first of all makes its appearance in India and spreads from here to the Western countries, generally after the lapse of a long period. There is, therefore, according to precedent, still a short period to run before the mellowness of amorous devotion (*madhura rasa*) is fully preached to all parts of the world. Just as the Sun rising first of all in India gradually illuminates all the countries of the West, in like manner the incomparable rays of the highest good, at intervals making their first appearance in India, suffuse the West before many days have passed.

VII. THE FOUNDER-ĀCHĀRYYAS

THE contributions of Vishnuswāmi, Nimbāditya, Rāmānuja and Madhva, the Founder-Āchāryas of the four Vaishnava communities (*sampradāyas*) of the present day, to the cause of theism, are so valuable and so necessary to know for a proper understanding of the theological position of Sree Chaitanya that we shall close our brief survey of the historical trend of theistic thought with a short account of the systems of the four great Vaishnava Āchāryas who preceded Sree Chaitanya.

The necessity of *sampradāya* or organised community in the domain of religion, has been explicitly recognised in the Shāstras. The words of Sree Vyasaadeva in the *Padma Purāna* on this subject are to the effect that the verbal formulæ that deliver from mental hallucinations (*mantranis*) are never effective except within the spiritual community; and the same authority goes on to observe that in the Fourth (*Kali*) Age there will be for this purpose four theistic (*Vaishnava*) communities (*sampradāyas*) founded by their respective Āchāryas, by the will of Godhead. This is not the advocacy of sectarianism. It upholds the principles of association and continuity in religious life as against anarchism. If rightly understood it is the procedure that is naturally followed by all persons who are sincerely minded, prefer the good law to anarchy and association with good people to egoistic isolation, and are truly catholic, not merely by profession, but also in their conduct. Those pseudo-liberals who pose as being above any class or community, are only anarchists in disguise. The truer instinct of mankind has always been alive to the fundamental necessity of belonging to a good, *i.e.*, well regulated, community.

The four communities (*sampradāyas*) of the Iron Age are connected with the ancient times by their recognition of the ulterior authority of the eternal ancient teachers, *viz.*, Lakshmi, Brahmā, Rudra and the four Sanas (*chatuhsanah*), respectively. The four

Founder-Āchāryas of the Iron Age professed to preach the views of those original teachers of the religion. Sree Rudra is the source of the teaching of Sree Vishnuswāmi; Sanaka, Sanātana, Sananda, Sanat Kumāra, that of Sree Nimbārka Swāmi, Sree Lakshmidēvi that of Sree Rāmānuja Swāmi and the four-faced Brahmā that of Madhvā Swāmi, in the Iron Age. The original pre-historic teachers, who are the ultimate source of the four communities, in the chronological order of their appearance, are (1) Lakshmi, the eternal and inseparable Consort of Vishnu, (2) Brahmā sprung from the navel-lotus of Garbhodasāyi Vishnu, (3) Rudra sprung from the second Purusha, and (4) the four Sanas who are the sons of Brahmā born from the mind. The chronological order of the Āchāryas of the Iron Age is (1) Sree Vishnuswāmi, (2) Sree Nimbāditya, (3) Sree Rāmānuja, and (4) Sree Madhvā.

Sree Vishnuswāmi

There are three different Vishnuswāmis belonging to the same line. The first of them in order of time is known as Ādi Vishnuswāmi and also as Sarbjna Muni. He was born in the Pāndya country, the southernmost part of ancient Drāviḍa in the third century B.C. His name, before he accepted *sannyāsa*, was Devatanu. He was a *tridandi sannyāsin* and re-established the old institution of *tridanda sannyāsa* in the Iron Age. We find among his immediate followers no less than seven hundred *tridandi sannyāsins* who were availed by him for preaching Vaishnavism against Buddhism. Vishnuswāmi is sometimes confounded with Sarbjnatmā Muni who was an exclusive monist (*kevalādṛaitarādin*). The system propounded by Ādi Vishnuswāmi or Sarbjna Muni is known by the name of *suddhādvaita siddhānta*, the pure monistic doctrine, as distinct from exclusive or pseudo-monism.

According to Sree Vishnuswāmi the individual soul (*jīva*) is a constituent part of the Substantive Reality (*vastu*); the power of the *vastu* is *māyā*; the activity of the *vastu* is the world; none of these being separate from the '*Vastu*'.

The first point to be noticed in this connection is that Vishnuswāmi does not identify the individual soul (*jīva*) with the

Brahman; neither does he conceive of the individual soul (*jīva*) as independent of the *Brahman*. His metaphor to bring out the relationship between the two, is that of the sparks of a great fire and the fire from which the sparks issue. Therefore, in the Scriptures the individual soul (*jīva*) has been sometimes called the *Brahman*, being qualitatively the same; and in other passages the individual soul (*jīva*) has been differentiated from the *Brahman*. In the next place the world being the activity of the *Brahman*, is also real and eternal. The origin and dissolution of the world as found in the Scriptures, mean its temporary disappearance but not substantive loss. The world is the unchanged transformation of the *Brahman*, just as the different ornaments made of gold are unchanged gold. Godhead, according to Vishnuswāmi, is the Embodiment of existence, self-consciousness and bliss in the embrace of the twin powers of '*Hlādīni*' (that which delights and is delighted) and '*Samvit*' (that which knows and makes known), as distinct from the bound soul who is, on the other hand, the source of all misery and enveloped in nescience. In his state of pure monistic consciousness the soul (*jīva*) is established in the relationship of servant to Godhead, which is the natural condition for the soul (*jīva*) who in the pure state is a fractional part of the Whole, viz., Godhead. Godhead is the Lord of '*māyā*', the soul (*jīva*) is subduable by the deluding or limiting energy (*māyā*). Godhead is self-manifest and transcendental bliss. The soul (*jīva*), although also self-manifest by reason of his being an integral part of the Whole, is located in the plane of misery, due to his attachment for a second entity besides Godhead. Godhead is ever free and never submits to any adjunctive modifications. He is possessed of transcendental qualities, is all-knowing, all-powerful, the Lord of all, the Regulator of all, the Object of worship of all, the Awarder of the fruit of all actions, the Abode of all beneficent qualities and substantive existence, consciousness and bliss.

Sree Vishnuswāmi following in the footsteps of Sree Rudra, was the worshipper of Sree Panchāshya (Man-lion). He admits the Bodily Form of Godhead made of the principles of existence, consciousness and bliss, and the eternal co-existence of worship, worshipper and the worshipped. In his own words 'the emancipated also, playfully assuming bodily forms, serve the Lord'. The

main authorities recognised by the Vishnuswāmi community (*sam-pradāya*) are 'Nrisimha tāpani,' 'Sreemad Bhāgavatam' and 'Sree Vishnupurānam'. Of the works of Vishnuswāmi himself the 'sarabajna sukta' alone is mentioned. The Vishnuswāmi school counts very few adherents at the present day. Sree Vallabhāchārya, although he calls himself his follower, differs in certain respects from the views of Sree Vishnuswāmi.

Sree Nimbāditya

Sree Nimbāditya is the propounder of bifurcial monism (*dvaitādvaitavāda*).

Sree Nimbārkāditya appeared in the town of Baidurya-pattan (mod. 'Munger-pattan' or 'Mungi-pattan') in the Telugu country. He is known variously as 'Nimbāditya,' 'Nimbārka' or 'Nimbābibhāvasu,' and sometimes also as 'Āruneya,' 'Niyamānanda' and 'Haripriyāchārya'. His followers are known as Nimāyets and are different from the 'Nimānandis' who profess to be followers of Sree Chaitanyadeva under His appellation of 'Nimānanda'. Sree Nimbāditya was an ascetic of the triple staff (*tridandi sanyāsin*); the line of his preceptorial succession being (1) Sree Nārāyanā, (2) Hamsa, (3) the Chatuhsanas, viz., Sanaka, etc., and (4) Nimbādityāchārya. Sree Nimbāditya's commentary of the *Vedānta Bhāshya* is known as the '*Vedānta-pārijata-saurabha*' and 'there are also several other works written by him.'

The system of Nimbārka holds the 'heard transcendental sound' (*sruti*) as the highest natural evidence of the Truth, and also accepts the testimony of other Shāstras when they follow heard sound (*sruti*). The source of Nimbāditya's teaching is the instruction imparted by the four Sanas to Sree Nārada Goswāmi in the seventh *prapāthaka* of the *Chhāndogyopanishad*, which may be summed up as follows, viz., 'that the Purānas are the fifth Veda; Vishnu is the Lord of all, devotion to Godhead in the forms of firm faith (*sraddhā*) and close addiction (*nishthā*) is glorified; there is nothing equal or superior to the love for Godhead; the eternal Abode of Godhead is praised; Godhead is independent of any other thing; the perfectly emancipated are the eternal servitors of Godhead and are engaged in eternal pastimes in the region of self-conscious activities in the company of Godhead; Godhead has

power of appearance to and disappearance from our view; the Vaishnavas are eternal and transcendental; the grace of Godhead is glorified, etc., etc.'

According to Sree Nimbāditya the individual (*jīva*) soul and the Supreme Soul are related to each other as integral part and Whole. The soul (*jīva*) is different from Godhead, but not separate. The soul (*jīva*) is both knowledge and knower, like the Sun which is self-luminous and also makes visible other objects. As an infinitesimal particle of consciousness the soul (*jīva*) is subordinate to Godhead Who is plenary consciousness. The souls (*jīvas*) are infinite in number. By reason of his smallness he is liable to association with and dissociation from bodies made by the deluding energy of Godhead (*māyā*). In the bound state the soul (*jīva*) is imprisoned in the gross and subtle physical bodies; in the free state he is dissociated from them. Souls (*jīvas*) are of three distinct kinds, *viz.*, those that are (1) free, (2) bound yet free, and (3) bound. There are various gradations of each one of these. The soul (*jīva*) is freed from the bondage of the deluding energy (*māyā*) by the grace of Godhead, there being no other way. The inanimate objects are two, *viz.*, (1) time, and (2) deluding energy (*māyā*). Time is either transcendental or material. The former is self-conscious and eternal, *i.e.*, undivided into past, present and future. The deluding energy (*māyā*) is the perversion of the self-conscious (*chit*), or the shadow of the latter, and possesses the qualities of the shadow. Divinity is free from defect. The real nature of Godhead is full of infinite beneficence. Godhead as Krishna is the highest *Brahman*. Krishna is the source of all beauty and sweetness. Attended by His Own Power, the Daughter of Brishabhānu, constantly served by thousands of intimate female friends (*sakhis*) who are the extended self of the Daughter of Brishabhānu, Krishna is the Object of the eternal worship of the individual soul (*jīva*). He has an eternal and transcendental bodily Form. He is formless to the material vision but possessed of form to the spiritual eye. He is independent, all-powerful, Lord of all, possessed of inconceivable power and eternally worshipped by the gods such as Brahmā, Siva, etc. Worship is of two kinds, *viz.*, (1) tentative devotion during novitiate, and (2) the highest devotion characterised by love. The

latter is aroused by the practice of nine kinds of devotion as means, consisting of hearing, chanting, etc.

The Nimbārka community is not mentioned in his works by Sree Jiva Goswāmi. He is also unnoticed in the *Sarbadarsanasamgraha* of Sāyana Mādhava. From which it is supposed that the current views of the present Nimbārka community were not extensively known till after the time of the author of *Sarbadarsanasamgraha*, or even of the six *Goswāmins*. There is, however, no doubt whatever that Sree Nimbāditya is a very ancient Achārya and the founder of the *sātvata dvaitādvaita sampradāya*.

Sree Rāmānuja

Sree Rāmānuja made his appearance in the year 938 of the *Saka* era in the village of Sriparambattur or Sree Mahābhutapuri about twenty-six miles to the west of Madras, in the family of a Drāviḍa Brāhmaṇa. His name, before he became an ascetic of the triple staff (*tridandi sannyāsin*), was Lakshmana. Lakshmana Desika accepted renunciation (*sannyāsa*) on the bank of Anantasar at Conjeeveram invoking grace of Sree Yamunāchārya. He soon became the head of the Sree community (*sampradāya*), which had its headquarters at Sree Rangam. He travelled all over India visiting Kashmir, Benares, Puri, etc., and established the *pāncharātrika* view (the system of fivefold knowledge) at all the important centres of religion. We do not intend to enter further into the details of his wonderful career at this place.

Sree Rāmānuja is the author of numerous works, the chief of which are *Vedānta-sāra*, *Vedānta-dīpa*, *Vedārtha-samgraha*, *Gītā Bhāshya*, *Sree Bhāshya*, etc.

In the Rāmānuja community every one is required to undergo purification by the method of the fivefold purificatory process (*pancha-samskāra*). Even a high-born Brāhmaṇa, according to the Rāmānujis, who has not gone through the above purificatory process, is as much an untouchable as the lowest of the *Chandālas*, and a *Chandāla* so purified is held to possess the highest sanctity. In the Rāmānuja community Vishnu is exclusively worshipped and the worship of all other gods is absolutely forbidden. In this

community there is also the institution of renunciation of the triple staff (*tridanda sannyāsa*).

Sree Rāmānuja is the propounder of the view which is known as Distinctive Monotheism (*Vishishtādvaitavāda*). This view is formally established scripturally in his commentary on the *Brahma sutra* known as *Sree Bhāshya*. The system of Sree Rāmānuja may be set forth as follows: The Nature of the Supreme *Brahman* is unitary. *Brahman* who is without a second is, however, possessed of quality. The cognitive principle (*chit*) and the principle of nescience (*achit*) are His quality and body. The cognitive principle (*chit*) and nescience (*achit*) are each of them of two kinds according as they happen to be either gross or subtle. The subtle cognitive (*chit*) and non-cognitive principle (*achit*), in the causal state, are transformed into the gross cognition and non-cognition as effect. *Brahman* Who is non-bifurcial knowledge being the sole Cause, both efficient and material, there exist in Him qualities corresponding to such activities. The qualities must be considered as qualifying the possessor of them. Therefore, self-consciousness (*chit*) and unconsciousness (*achit*) are the qualities corresponding to the activities of *Brahman* as the Cause. The body is dependent on, is enjoyed and regulated by, its possessor and is also that by which the latter is known. Self-consciousness and unconsciousness depend upon, are enjoyed and regulated by, non-bifurcial *Brahman*, and, as effect, are the manifestations of *Brahman* as Cause. There is no such difference in the individual (*jīva*) soul as *deva*, man, etc. It is the soul obtaining enjoyable bodies, as the appropriate result of his own activities, that makes the effect known in terms of such bodies. Therefore, *devas*, men, etc., are only indications of different activities of the soul. The bodies such as those of *devas*, men, etc., are thus modifications or qualities of the soul. The relation in which the body stands to the individual (*jīva*) soul is also that in which the individual (*jīva*) soul stands to the Supreme Soul. In Distinctive Non-dualism three categories are admitted, viz., (1) the self-conscious principle (*chit*) which means the individual (*jīva*), (2) the non-conscious principle (*achit*) or matter, and (3) Godhead (*Iswara*), the Regulator of spirit (*chit*) and matter (*achit*), Who is the highest Personality of Nārāyana. This view categorically denies the follow-

ing: Absolute dualism (*kevala-dvaita-vāda*), absolute non-dualism (*kevala-advaita-vāda*) and attributive dualistic non-dualism (*vishista-dvaita-advaita-vāda*).

The self-conscious principle (*chit*) or individual (*jīva*) soul is infinitesimal (*anu*) as opposed to the greatness of *Brahman* and is an integral part (*amsa*) of the Integer (*amsi*) or Possessor of the part, *viz.*, the *Brahman*. This littleness of the individual (*jīva*) soul is directly and explicitly stated in the Scriptures as his specific characteristic. It is an integral part of *Brahman*, just as his body is an integral part of the individual soul or as His glow is an integral part or quality of the fire or the Sun; or as the quality is an integral part of the substance. The individual soul is of three kinds, *viz.*, (1) bound (*baddha*), (2) emancipated (*mukta*), and (3) eternal (*nitya*). His proper nature is existence and bliss and he is cognisable to himself.

As regards the non-conscious (*achit*), according to Rāmānuja it is devoid of cognition and liable to transformation. It is of three kinds, *viz.*, (1) pure, *e.g.*, objects in *Vaikuntha*, (2) mixed, *i.e.*, constituted of the triple mundane qualities, and (3) unsubstantial or time.

Sree Nārāyana is Godhead. He is distinct from the principle of consciousness (*chit*) and non-consciousness (*achit*) as substance from quality. He is the only cause of the origin, continuance and destruction of the spiritual (*chit*) and material (*achit*) worlds and of cessation of the cycle of births. He is free from every imperfection, full of infinite beneficent qualities, the soul of all, the transcendental *Brahman*, the transcendental Light, the transcendental Entity, the Supreme Soul, the only Subject of all Scriptures and the Guide of all hearts. The nature of Godhead is fivefold, *viz.*, (1) the ultimate Reality (*para tattva*), (2) the principle of expansion (*byuha tattva*) for creation, maintenance, destruction, for protecting the bound *jīvas* and showing His mercy to worshippers, as Samkarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, (3) the principle of the origination of any state (*bibhava tattva*), *viz.*, Avatāras like Rāma, Nrisinha, etc., (4) the inner Guide (*antaryami tattva*) as (a) the Supreme Soul Who dwells in the hearts of His servants, and as (b) Nārāyana with Lakshmi resid-

ing in the hearts of enlightened persons, (5) the principle of symbolic manifestation (*archā avatāra*) as Conglomerate Embodiment (*Sree Vigraha*), Name, Form, etc., worshipped by His servants in accordance with their respective aptitudes. He seems as if ignorant although All-knowing, as if powerless although All-powerful, as if needing help although His wish is ever fully realised, as if needing protection although the Protector, and as if serving His devotees although their Master.

Devotion is the proper method of worshipping Godhead, is extremely pleasing, the only thing needful and is of the nature of a particular kind of knowledge which produces a distaste for every other thing. Godhead is attainable by the soul imbued with devotion.

Srimat Purnaprajna or Sree Madhvāchārya

Srimat Purnaprajna or Madhvāchārya made his appearance in this world in the *Saka* year 1040 in the sacred *tirtha* known as the Pājakā Kshetra situated about eight miles to the south-east of Uḍupi Kshetra in South Canārā. His name, before he accepted *sannyāsa*, was Vāsudeva. Sree Vāsudeva came of a Brāhmaṇa family, his father's name being Sree Nārāyana Bhatta, who bore the surname of Madhvageha due to the fact that one of his ancestors, who was an immigrant from the country of Ahichchhatra, built his dwelling in the middle part of the village-settlement. His mother's name was Vedabati or Vedavidyā. Vāsudeva accepted renunciation of the ascetic's staff (*danda sannyāsa*) from Sree Achyutapreksha, the disciple of Sree Prajnatirtha, in the line of Garudabahan, without obtaining the previous permission of his parents, at the age of eleven, and received the designation of 'Ānandatirtha,' or its equivalent 'Madhva'. Sree Achyutapreksha at that time happened to be in charge of the shrine of Sree Ananteswara, situated in the neighbouring village of Rajatapeethapura. The order of spiritual preceptorial succession, according to the Mādhvas of Rajatapeethapura, of Madhvāchārya, is as follows: (1) Sree Nārāyana as Hansa, (2) Four-faced Brahmā, (3) Chatuhsanah, (4) Durvāsā, (5) Pāsatirtha Yati, (6) Satyaprajna, (7) Prajnatirtha, (8) Achyutapreksha, and (9) Madhva. It is not our purpose in this place to enter into the details of his career which was long and eventful. Sreemad Madhva was the worshipper

of Boy-Krishna, whose holy Form, miraculously rescued from a sinking boat, was solemnly installed by him at Sree Udupi Kshetra and still receives worship from the *sannyāsins*, his successors in the disciplic line. Sree Madhvāchārya had a most powerful physique. He journeyed twice to Sree Badarika and visited all the principal *tirthas* of India where he preached his doctrines and engaged in successful disputations with the leading scholars of the rival schools. Sree Madhvāchārya disappeared from this world in the 79th year of his advent.

Sree Madhvāchārya wrote numerous works and established many Maths with organised service and worship for the purpose of spreading his bifurcional theistic view. As many as thirty-eight separate works, all in Sanskrit, from his pen, are still extant. The literature thus brilliantly inaugurated swelled to immense proportions by subsequent additions of many valuable works by his successors.

The teaching of Sree Madhvāchārya is found summarised in a short verse which is regarded by the members of the school as giving a correct view of his position and may be rendered thus: "Divine Vishnu is the Highest of all. The world is true. Between Godhead, *jīva* and matter there exists fivefold eternal reciprocal difference. The *jīvas* (individual souls) are the servants of Sree Hari. There exists gradation of fitness among *jīvas*. The manifestation of the function in conformity with the proper nature of the *jīva* is emancipation (*mukti*). The practice of the realized function conformably with the soul's own proper nature is pure, unalloyed or causeless devotion. Sound, inference and direct perception constitute the triple evidence. Sree Hari is the only Object Who is knowable by the whole body of the Scriptures; or, in other words, realisation of Godhead is possible only by following the path of the *heard* revealed sound (*sruti*)."¹ The whole of this position has been accepted specifically by Sripād Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana in his '*Prameya Ratnāvali*'. This definitely establishes the descent of Sree Gauḍiya Sampradāya, that follows Sree Krishna Chaitanya, from the Mādhva school and justifies its descriptive title Mādhva-Gauḍiya (or Brahma-Mādhvā-Gauḍiya) Sampradāya, current among the devotees.

According to Sree Madhvāchārya, as has already been stated, Sree Vishnu is the Highest Entity. Reality is of two kinds, *viz.*, (1) self-regulated and (2) subordinate. Vishnu is the one perfectly self-regulated Entity. He is the Abode of infinite, free-from-defect, beneficent, qualities. He is all-powerful, autocrat, the Regulator of the animate and inanimate worlds, from the tip of finger-nail to the top of hair the holy embodied Form of existence, intelligence and bliss, cognisant and delighting in His own real nature and without any subjective heterogeneity. There is no distinction between His body and Himself as the possessor of body. There is absolute identity between His Body, Quality, Action and Name. That is to say, there is no dividing line between His Name, Form, Quality and Activity (*Leclā*). He is Eternal, the Regulator of all, the Lord of all, *Iswara* (Ruler) of even Brahmā, Mahesa and Lakshmis and for this reason He is the Highest Godhead, *i.e.*, God of all the gods. He is in every Age and country the holy embodied Form of the Possessor of all pure energy. Those persons who notice any distinction or distinction and non-distinction in the Name, Form, Quality and Activity of the *Avatāras*, *viz.*, Fish, Tortoise, etc., certainly enter the realm of gross ignorance (*tamas*). There is no particle of absence of self-consciousness in Sree Hari. His holy Form possesses hand, foot, mouth, belly, etc., all those being of the nature of pure bliss. From Him proceed always creation, stability, destruction, the course of the souls, knowledge, bondage, emancipation, etc. Divine Vishnu exists eternally as the Archetype of all individual souls who are His differentiated parts. In other words, in the realm full of the pastimes of the pure intelligence, an endless series of differentiated souls from Brahmā to the lowest insect endowed with the embodied forms of the principles of existence, cognition and bliss are eternally existent. They are the unqualified counterparts of the corresponding Forms of Vishnu Who, in His eternal and various Forms, is their Archetype. The individual souls in *Vaikuntha* are the substantive, unqualified reflections of the corresponding Divine Forms. Individual souls are differentiated from Godhead. The soul is an embodiment of the principles of cognition and bliss in a small measure, which principles exist in their fullest measure in the Person of Godhead. *The material bodies of the bound souls*

do not correspond to their original pure spiritual forms, and, therefore, from the nature of the physical forms of the bound souls the nature of their original forms cannot be inferred. Sree Hari has two kinds of constituent parts (*amsas*), *viz.*, (1) differentiated counterparts, *e.g.*, individual souls (*jivas*) in *Vaikuntha*, and (2) undifferentiated parts of Himself, *viz.*, the Divine manifestations (*Avatāras*), *e.g.*, in the divine Forms of the Fish, Tortoise, etc. In His pastimes Divine Vishnu manifests Himself in a four-fold Form, *viz.*, Vāsudeva, Samkarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, for the purpose of such activities as creation, etc. In the Form of Pradyumna He creates the world, in the Form of Aniruddha maintains, and in the Form of Samkarsana, destroys it. In the Form of Vāsudeva He delivers souls. The functions of creation and destruction are carried out by Divine Vishnu by means of gods exercising delegated power, or by the highest grade of souls exercising similar power. Vishnu as Pradyumna in this manner endows Brahmā with the creative power and as Samkarsana confers on Rudra the power of destruction. He himself as Aniruddha exercises the power of maintenance, and as Vāsudeva confers deliverance. Divine Vishnu from time to time appears in this world as *Avatāras* in the Forms of Fish, Tortoise, etc. In the twenty-four Forms as Keshava, etc., and Vāsudeva, etc., He is the Regulator of the gods who represent the twenty-four principles of the universe, and in the five Forms as Vāsudeva, Samkarsana, Pradyumna, Aniruddha, and Nārāyana, He governs the five encasements. He regulates the four states of differentiated souls, *viz.*, (1) waking, (2) dreaming, (3) sleeping, (4) unbound, in the four Forms of *Vista*, *Taijas*, *Prajna* and *Turiya*. As the Soul and the Soul of souls He is the Regulator of the gross and spiritual bodies, corresponding to the real nature of the souls and, remaining manifest in all the limbs of souls as Ananta, He rules over them. He is the Source Who imparts their initiative to the gods representing the principles of the universe, and to the different senses. He is not responsible for the meritorious and sinful acts of *jivas* to which He employs them according to their fitness and in exercise of their freedom of will. Although He appears in the world in the various Forms of Fish, Tortoise, Man, etc., His birth and activities or bodies are not

phenomenal, notwithstanding their material appearance to the vision of bound *jīvas*. His *Avatāras* are of two kinds, viz., (1) Embodiments of knowledge, and (2) Embodiments of power. Sree Krishna is the Appearance (*Avatāra*) of Divine cognition and power in conjunction. In such Divine Appearances as those of Dhanvantari, etc., Krishna's power of showing mercy to His devotees alone is manifest. Sree Vaikuntha is the eternal Divine Abode of Vishnu. At the beginning of creation the twin Divine Abodes, viz., the White Island (*Sveta-dvīpa*) and the Divine Seat in the form of Sree Ananta (*Anantāsana*), appear in this world. Sree Lakshmi is the beloved Divine Consort of Vishnu. She accompanies Her Lord to this world in His Appearances and is associated with Him in various Forms with the infinite reciprocal Forms of her Lord. The different names of Sree Lakshmi are: Sree, Bhū, Durgā, Māyā, Jayā, Kriti, Sānti, Ambhrāni, Sitā, Dakshinā, Jayanti, etc., each having distinctive functions. Vishnu creates the material universe at the beginning of every cycle (*kalpa*) using the eternal inanimate force, that has no beginning, as the material cause. This world is neither non-existent, nor false, nor 'momentary'. The different objects are limited in duration as regards their existence in their particular forms, but are eternal as regards their constituent principle.

There is categorical difference (1) between the individual soul (*jīva*) and Godhead, (2) between one individual (*jīva*) and another, (3) between matter and Godhead, (4) between individual soul (*jīva*) and matter and (5) between one form of matter and another form. Sree Madhvāchārya accepts this fivefold difference as real.

Individual souls (*jīvas*) are divided into three classes, according as their original nature is made of either (1) intelligence and bliss, or (2) of a mixture of intelligence and joy and misery of ignorance, or (3) of unmixed misery and ignorance. Individual souls (*jīvas*) are provided with physical and mental bodies in accordance with their actions of the previous cycle (*kalpa*), at the beginning of material creation. Individual souls (*jīvas*) are infinite in number. One's proper nature or the capacity of attaining to it, is eternal and belongs eternally to all individual souls. It is the primal cause of all efforts of all individual souls. Action

(*karma*), although destructible, is eternal in the continuity of its flow or sequence. Previously performed activity (*karma*), which is without a beginning, is the second cause. There is a third cause in the shape of the effort at the time of the performance of the act. All these are subject to Vishnu, Lord of the material energy (*māyā*). In other words Godhead awards the worldly course of individual souls by means of these three causes, but they have no power over Him as He is the Lord of material Energy (*Māyā*). Liberation (*mukti*) is the realisation of their own proper natures by persons endowed with the luminous, self-expressive (*sāttvic*) quality, on the dissolution of the symbolic material body, by the practice of devotion. It is not something adventitious but only the continued establishment of the individual soul in his own proper nature. The external material cases, super-imposed on the real or spiritual nature of the soul, are two in number, viz., (1) the case forged by the soul and (2) the envelope bestowed by the material energy of Godhead (*Māyā*). When Godhead is favourably disposed He destroys completely the coating of nescience caused by the soul and removes the screen of the material energy (*māyā*) which is a gift of the Divinity. Thereupon the soul is enabled to see with his spiritual eye the Supreme Person dwelling in his own heart. The devotion that is aroused after the beatific vision is the highest or unalloyed, being devoid of all foreign impulses in the shape of physical activity (*karma*), etc. It is only by devotion that the favour of Godhead is attained. This leads to liberation (*mukti*), being the attainment of the Feet of Vishnu. This is followed by devotion in her real, proper form which is not the means but the goal. The initial stage in the process, is listening with faith to the words of Scriptures glorifying the greatness of Godhead, from the lips of devotees (*sādhus*).

Sree Madhvāchārya admits the authority of the triple evidence of (1) direct perception, (2) inference, and (3) revelation (*āgama*). The last is sub-divided into (1) those Scriptures that are not made by any person, and (2) those so made. To the first of these groups belong the Vedas such as Rik, etc., Upanishad, the formulæ that deliver from mental function (*mantram*), Brāhmaṇas, the concluding portion of the Veda (*pariṣista*), etc. To the second group are assigned History (*Itihāsa*), supplementary

accounts (*Purāna*), fivefold knowledge (*pancha-rātra*), etc. The *Purānas*, etc., help in understanding the real significance of the *Vedas*. The *Purānas* are of three kinds, viz., (1) *Sāttvika*, (2) *Rājasika*, and (3) *Tāmasika*. The *Sāttvika Purānas*, such as *Sreemad Bhāgavatam*, etc., are alone admissible as evidence of the Truth. If any portions of the *Rājasa Purānas* are in conformity with the statements of the *Sāttvika Purānas* those may also be accepted as evidence. Those parts of the *Sāttvika Purānas* that express ideas contrary to the *sāttvika* view, were intended for deluding the atheists (*daityas*), and should not be accepted by righteous persons. The *Tāmasa Purānas* were concocted for deluding evil-minded persons (*daityas*). All *Purānas*, in so far as they support the *sāttvic* view, are admissible as evidence. The following views of Sree Madhvāchārya are also interesting. The servant of Vishnu (Vaishnava), the All-pervasive Lord, is the highest of all animate beings (*jivas*). The worship of Vishnu alone is to be performed. All worship of other gods is forbidden. Everything is gained by uttering the Name of Hari. The Vaishnava, even if he be sprung from a *Chandāla* family, is the revered of all. Vaishnavas are to be served with zeal and no offence must be permitted against them. The *Brāhmaṇa* is recognised by straightforwardness, the *Sudra* by duplicity of conduct.

Sree Chaitanya is the disciplic successor of Sree Madhvāchārya and ultimately of Sree Brahmā, the original Founder after whom the community (*sampradāya*) is named as the *Brahma Sampradāya*. The order of spiritual succession (*āmnāya*) up to the present time from Sree Brahmā, as preserved in the Brahma-Gauḍiya Sampradāya, is as follows: (1) Sree Krishna, (2) Brahmā, (3) Nārada, (4) Vyasa, (5) Madhwa, (6) Padmanābha, (7) Nrihari, (8) Mādhava, (9) Akshobhya, (10) Jayatirtha, (11) Jnanasindhu, (12) Dayānidhi, (13) Vidyānidhi, (14) Rājendra, (15) Jayadharma, (16) Purushottama, (17) Vyasartha, (18) Lakshmipati, (19) Mādhabendra Puri, (20) Iswara (Advaita, Nityānanda), (21) Sree Chaitanya, (22) (Swarupa, Sanātana) Rupa, (23) (Jiva) Raghunātha, (24) Krishna-dāsa, (25) Narottama, (26) Viswanātha, (27) (Baladeva) Jagannātha, (28) (Bhaktivinode) Gaurakishore, (29) Sree Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswati Sree Bārshabhbānāvīdayitadās. All these are

paramahansas and Sree Chaitanya's undifferentiated servitors. The writer is devoid of all aptitude for service and endeavours to have his mind humbly fixed on the lotus feet of Sree Guru Sree Siddhānta Saraswati Thākur, as the unworthy object of his causeless mercy and of his associated counterparts.

The views of the four Founder-Āchāryas of the respective Vaishnava communities (*sampradāyas*) briefly noticed above, stand in such close and organic relation to the teaching of Sree Chaitanya and to one another that their relationship will be best brought out in course of the narrative and at the proper place, in the light of the philosophy of Sree Chaitanya which, as I have already noticed, reconciles, harmonises and perfects them. For the present it will be sufficient for our purpose to notice in regard to these four schools that the system of Sree Chaitanya, although it is identical with none of them, either wholly or partially admits the special excellence of certain features of each. Thus, for example, Sree Chaitanya accepts more or less the eternal specific Form of the Divinity as Embodiment of all-existence, all-knowledge and all-bliss (*sachcidānanda nitya Bigraha*) of Madhva, the postulations of Rāmānuja regarding Divine Power, the principle of unalloyed non-dualism and of Godhead as 'the All of His Own' and the eternal dualistic-monotheism of Nimbārka which last has been perfected by Sree Chaitanya into the truly scientific Truth of the *Doctrine of inconceivable simultaneous distinction and non-difference*.

The act of Sree Chaitanya in preferring the Brahma community (*sampradāya*) by His entry into it as Disciple, to which Sree Madhvāchārya also belongs, to the other Vaishnava schools, is explained by the fact that the doctrine of unalloyed differentialism propounded by Sree Madhvāchārya which makes the mutual difference, as between Godhead, individual soul (*jīva*) and the material world, definite and permanent and also recognises their eternal separate existence, keeps all individual souls (*jīva*) most clearly and frankly at a great distance from the fell disease of absolute monism which is the opposite pole, being the empirical denial of the essence of all theistic thought passing itself off as theism to the insidious seductions of which most worldly people are so easily

liable to succumb. We shall return to this important subject in its proper place.

It is the empiricists who are responsible for the origination of the current notion that theism is a product of a particular stage of material civilization in its progressive onward march. It will be our purpose to prove in the next chapter that such a view is opposed to all historical experience. It is no doubt true that the revelationists do not admit the applicability of the theory of evolution in its present form to spiritual subjects as it does not recognise the existence of any other entity except matter and mind. The history of spiritual evolution is connected with the progress of material civilization correspondingly and negatively, and not causally, the latter only serving to bring out that aspect of the former which happens to be the most intelligible to itself at the stage. This difference is wholly overlooked by materialistic evolutionists and no less by the so-called critical school of historians who have essayed to treat of spiritual events. The transcendental aspect of theism is the oldest fact known to history and, philosophically speaking, is incapable of being evolved out of the empirical consciousness. The abandonment of no historical principle worth the name, is involved in the recognition of this fact as a fundamental and axiomatic truth even on the evidence, although necessarily negative in character, of our empirical experience as will appear from an impartial consideration of the historical facts contained in the next chapter.

VIII. HISTORICAL VAISHNAVISM

THE Scope of History does not extend to the transcendental for the simple reason that History deals exclusively with the phenomena of this world. The historical view of any Divine event is, under the circumstances, only that of the deluded soul under the thraldom of the material Energy. It is not its business to deal with anything that is outside the ordinary sensuous experience of men in general. Therefore, we cannot expect modern historians, who are limited to the above view of their function, to sympathise with, or even to consider seriously, the subject of this work as one that belongs properly to their particular branch of knowledge. But in spite of this purely secular attitude of modern historians they have been unable to rule religion altogether out of their subject. There have been empiric historians who have, in the spirit of specialists, without discarding the secular outlook which it is really impossible for them to do without denying their avowed function as investigators of a branch of empiric knowledge, attempted to isolate and treat 'exclusively' of religious history. While professing all due respect for their methods, without ignoring their necessary limitations, we propose to employ their method, divested of unnecessary and hostile narrowness, in this chapter, for the purpose of proving our proposition that the worship of Vishnu as transcendental Godhead has been prevalent from time immemorial.

It is of course not possible to treat exhaustively in the course of a short chapter a subject that is both large and, by its nature, controversial. That effort must be reserved for a separate work. I shall be content in this chapter with supplying a rough sketch of the account of the worship of Vishnu as it has prevailed from the earliest times, on the evidence supplied by the religious books directly, by the course of the evolution of ritual and the activities of outstanding personalities.

The Rig-Veda is regarded on all hands as being the oldest of the existing books. The worship of Vishnu is found mentioned in the very first *mantrams* of this work, which contain a reference to the Vāmana (Dwarf) *Avatāra* of Vishnu. The beginning of the compilation of the Rik *mantrams* may accordingly be considered as at least subsequent to the Vāmana *Avatāra*. The subject of the ten *Avatāras* of Vishnu will be considered from another point of view in the next chapter. The ten *Avatāras* are mentioned everywhere in the following chronological order, viz., (1) Matsya (Fish), (2) Kurma (Tortoise), (3) Varāha (Boar), (4) Nrisimha (Man-Lion), (5) Vāmana (Dwarf), (6) Parasu-Rāma, (7) Rāma, (8) Balarāma, (9) Buddha, and (10) Kalki. When the Rig-Veda was being compiled the first five *Avatāras* of Vishnu had already taken place.

Objection may be taken to the above on the ground that there is no mention of the other *Avatāras* in the Rig-Veda, which are mentioned only in the Purānas which are subsequent to the Vedic period.

The Purānas assumed their present form long after the compilation of the Rig-Veda. But the original Purānas were written in very old Brāhmī which has survived in the language of the *mantrams* that have been preserved in the Vedas while the original books themselves have disappeared completely. The present Purānas which are in the Sanskrit language were written later and replaced the older works from which much of their accounts was derived. Many of the events recorded in the Purānas occurred in the pre-Vedic Age. This is well known to the critical historians and the subject has been treated with ability by an English scholar Pargiter, in his recent work 'The ancient Indian historical tradition'.

There is another striking point of difference between the Vedas and the Purānas. The Vedas do not contain really much matter that is of the nature of the supernatural. They refer to Natural phenomena and display an almost exclusive attachment to mundane advantages in their prayers to the various gods, who are regarded as presiding over the different forces of physical Nature. This naturalistic or materialistic character of the Vedic religion has been noticed by all Vedic scholars. The singular absence of the really supernatural factor in the oldest existing religious

book of the world has not received sufficient critical attention. The Purāṇas are full of the supernatural. To the so-called critical historian this has always appeared as the special disqualification of the Purāṇas as a source for *sober* history. But this feature is capable of a very different and far more rational interpretation.

I have already mentioned that the worship of Vishnu occurs in the Vedas along with that of the other gods. If we direct our close attention to the character of the hymns of the Rig-Veda we would notice a great difference between the hymns addressed to Vishnu and those addressed to the other gods. All the hymns, without a single exception, that are addressed to the other gods, are full of purely mundane expectations and references. All the hymns, without a single exception, addressed to Vishnu are absolutely free from *all* mundane reference. The worship of Vishnu is absolutely pure. Vishnu *alone* is Infinite, all the other gods are limited. Vishnu is also a personal God, as the other gods. The finite gods are approachable by their worshippers by limited references. But Vishnu is recognised as unapproachable by mundane reference.

As Vishnu was not available by exoteric efforts, this led to the formulation of the worship of the other gods. Vishnu was never a god of Nature. The other gods were gods of Nature. These formed, as it were, the exoteric faces of Vishnu and were regarded by their worshippers as independent of Vishnu. From the earliest times the worship of these gods had existed alongside the worship of Vishnu.

The Vedic religion viewed in this light will appear to have been of the nature of a later reaction against the older pure worship of Vishnu. It is, in fact, the first movement of the anti-theistic thought, of which we possess any written record.

This establishes the identity of Vishnu, and the worship of Vishnu, of the Rig-Veda with the Vaishnavism of the Purāṇas and of the present Age. This fact has been most clearly established by the Vaishnava Āchāryas, within the narrower historical period, from the time of Ādi Vishnuswāmi onwards.

An attempt was made in the subsequent period to mix up the pure worship of Krishna with the other worships. This attempt

was exposed by the Vaishnava Āchāryas who helped to restore from time to time the pure eternal religion.

Historically speaking, therefore, the anti-Vaishnavite thought is almost as old as the Vaishnavite, but not quite so old.

The Vedic religion, which, in its fruitive aspect, degenerated into ceremonialism and aimed solely at trivial worldly advantages, led to a schism in the ranks of the anti-theists marked by the rise of Buddhism. Gautama Buddha belonged to the sixth century B.C. Buddha is directly anti-Vedic and himself belonged to the Vaishnavite school. But his teaching was misunderstood by his atheistical followers who severed all connection with the chain of the *Avatāras* of Vishnu to which their Founder had belonged. This explains the philosophical affinity of extant atheistical Buddhism with the polytheism of the Vedas as expounded by Sankara, in spite of the traditionally supposed opposition of Buddha to the Vedas.

The major portion of the Vedas, therefore, constituting what is known technically as the *Karma Kāndiya* part (*i.e.*, that portion which is devoted to fruitive activities), is polytheistic or, more truly, anti-theistic. But its ritual was not exclusively its own. The *Yajna* or sacrifice was originally a form of Vaishnavite worship, but it was subsequently adopted as the basis of the anti-theistic worship and in that form elaborated into its later complex forms. But the *Yajna* itself was not the oldest form of the Vishnuvite worship. The original form of the Vishnuvite worship was *dhyāna* (*i.e.*, meditation, corresponding to solitary rationalistic worship, the term means that mode which is established through argument). This mode of worship is represented in its pure form by Astābakra. It became mixed up with mundane references in the later *Hatha Yoga*. But at first it was not so. It is the form of worship that corresponds to the inactive or the meditative temper. This was the earliest theistic form of worship. The *Yajna*, 'sacrifice,' was the next stage and represents the active temper. The institution of *yajna* developed into that of *archana* or ritualistic worship. The *samkirtana* propounded by Sree Chaitanya replaces *archana* as the final form of Vishnuvite worship. This order of development is in accordance with the *shloka* of the *Sreemad Bhāgavatam* (XII-3-52), 'What is obtained in the *Satya Age* by means

of *dhyāna*, in the *Tretā* Age by *yajna*, in *Dvāpara* by *archana*, may be gained in the *Kali* Age by chanting or *kirtana* of Hari.

The necessity for the preservation of the older *Purānas* was probably less imperatively felt after the composition of the *Mahābhārata* in which were incorporated their principal contents in a condensed form. The present *Purānas* derived their accounts mainly from the *Mahābhārata*, with later embellishments and interpolations. The *Mahābhārata* and the *Purānas* thus contain the oldest historical tradition of India which is not in conformity with the extant portion of the *Vedas* either as regards their narrative or their religious tenets. A group of *Purānas* is specially devoted to the history and doctrines of Vaishnavism, which also appears more or less in all the *Purānas*. In this *history* is found the supernatural account of the numerous mundane Appearances (*Avatāras*) of Vishnu.

We have already stated that the hymns of the Rig-Veda that are addressed to Vishnu, contain no mundane reference. Vishnu is considered as being outside physical Nature. In the hymns He is also spoken of as the Infinite and the Divinity in His fullness and perfection. As He happens to be Infinite He is also to be worshipped not by any limited reference but infinitely or by the fullness of His worshippers. But although Vishnu is thus believed to have been situated beyond this universe, His occasional 'descent' or *Avatāra* into this nether world, was also known to the Rishis of the Rig-Veda. The fifth of the well-known ten *Avatāras* of Vishnu, is actually mentioned in several passages of the Rig-Veda. The Vāmana *Avatāra* of Vishnu appears to be nearest to the Age of the Rig-Veda and might have preceded its compilation by an interval of time which was sufficiently short to allow its impression to persist in the memory of those who were not very keen regarding His worship. Vāmana is the last *Avatāra* of Vishnu in the *Satya* Age.

The fact that the accounts of these *Avatāras* of Vishnu that are found in the *Purānas*, happen to be supernatural need not prejudice us against their authenticity. Such a procedure will lead us to taboo the Bible and the Korān and Sree Chaitanyacharitāmrita and to court the misfortune of leaving out of the consideration of history the substance of religion or to mis-state it as un-

historical, thereby condemning the subject of History itself to the class of purely atheistical studies, and, therefore, fit to be shunned as tainted by partisan bias against Godhead or even as a snare, by all theistically disposed persons. History would indeed be incomplete, unwholesome and meaningless if it left out the all-important subject and stunt itself to the purely mundane aspect of our experience, under the untenable, mischievous and atheistical plea of scientific necessity.

But the mundane and the spiritual should of course be kept rigorously separate, as they really are so by their nature. Mundane matters should certainly be represented as mundane. They should not be allowed to pass in the name of the spiritual. This is the eternal line of demarcation that separates the material from the spiritual, *i.e.*, the temporary and the untrue from the eternal and the absolutely True. If the office of the historian be to investigate into the Real Truth he cannot possibly find Him if he rigorously confines himself to the manipulation of untruth for his own particular satisfaction. By adopting such a procedure he will fail in his duty towards his subject, towards himself and others. Therefore, the very first thing which he ought to do is to abandon once for all the so-called critical, or as it too often means, the sneering and worldly, attitude towards the supernatural for the utterly foolish reason that it does not obey those narrow canons gratuitously set up by himself and which are inapplicable to the Truth by being wilfully based on the principles of limited space and time and an insatiable desire for the attainment of worldly advantages.

If this reasonable attitude of our natural partiality for the Real Truth, is adopted, our eyes would open of themselves and begin to distinguish between the grain and the chaff in the treatment of the history of the world. When the Vaishnava Āchāryas declare that the only way, in which the individual soul engrossed in the materialistic outlook (*bound jīva*), can get rid of his ignorance of the Real Truth Who alone matters, is the constant perusal, listening to and contemplation of the supernatural Activities of the Descents (*Avatāras*) of the Divinity, with faith and reverence, they do not refer by these terms to the erroneous concoctions of the human imagination but to the only history of the Divinity that is alone true in the judgment of those who are

acquainted with it, both by realisation in their life and by the study of the *history* of the truth. The objection that what is supernatural cannot exist at all under the conditions of time and space and, are, therefore, unreal and fictitious, is also contradicted by the actual experience of mankind who have, in the teeth of such objections, always believed in such happenings for the sound reason that nothing should be impossible with Godhead.

Once the force of the above argument is really admitted we are immediately relieved of the illogical bias that leads us to declare that history does not prove that the supernatural had ever happened at all. We should rather say that the supernatural never appeared as such to the blinded vision of unbelievers who have always formed the majority, as they do now, in this godless world. But such was the inexplicable force of those very supernatural events that their reality was admitted by the best, *i.e.*, by unworldly and pure minds of all Ages, and, on their authority, they have continued to be believed generally, although crudely, by an overwhelming majority of the peoples of all subsequent Ages.

The prejudice of the critical school is due to its failure to distinguish between the supernatural and the unnatural or anti-natural. This has led to the adumbration of the doctrine of miracles. The Divine law is never broken and is sufficiently capacious to accommodate within itself with perfect consistency both the natural and the supernatural. Those who suppose that they can detect a breach of the Law on the part of Godhead for the purpose of convincing (?) unbelievers, are sadly deluded, indeed. The supernatural happens to be supernatural because it is above or beyond the natural or limited. Anything that is limited, whether it is called a 'miracle' or by any other name, cannot be anything but limited. And for this reason the supernatural lies beyond our present limited understanding. The *Avatāras* of Vishnu belong to the category of the supernatural and cannot be perceived by any of the senses or be apprehended by the materialised understanding if such *Avatāra* or Vishnu's descent into the finite world takes place even before our very eyes and in these days of the noon-day light (or darkness?) of almost unqualified empiricism.

It is not the paucity of materials, which exist and have existed in abundance from the remotest antiquity stored up in the pages

of the innumerable Scriptures, that is the difficulty of the historian of theism. The difficulty is to convince the sophisticated reader regarding its proper place in History.

Before the advent of Buddha the Vaishnavite or theistic thought had already been recorded in a vast literature. The older *Purānas* still existed and the *Mahābhārata* had been recently compiled. The Vedas in their *Samhitā* portion could not avoid all reference to it and the *Upanishads* are altogether theistic, containing, as they do, the rich harvest of the realisations of the Age of contemplation. The Vaishnavite thought maintains its distinctive character in the *sutra* period and the *Gṛihya* and *Srauta sutras* are full of *Purānic* matter. These together with the *Tāpanis* and the *Vedāngas*, which had their theistic group of works, formed the source from which the Vaishnava Āchāryas have drawn their materials from the third century B.C. onwards within the comparatively recent period of recorded History.

The present classical Sanskrit language came into use about four thousand years ago. It rendered obsolete the older works and replaced them by books written in the new language.

Anti-Vishnuvite thought is as old as the beginning of history. The *Avatāras* of Vishnu are declared to have been due to the prevalence of atheism. The portions of the Vedas devoted to the cult of fruitive works, as we have already observed, belong to the anti-Vishnuvite school under the garb of friendly co-existence. This is an ordinary and very old rule. On the side of philosophy we find a continuous development of atheism which runs parallel to the Vishnuvite thought and culminates in the atheistical schools of the subsequent period under the garb of Scriptural sanction. This mixing up of theism with atheism in the Scriptures themselves, is quite natural and is due to the cunning of a group of intellectual atheists.

But within the atheistic camp this caution was not observed by all. Buddha was opposed to the fruitive *yajnas* of the Vedas and was Himself a leading Vishnuvite having been recognised as the ninth *Avatāra* of Vishnu by the theistic school. But his pseudo-followers, misunderstanding the anti-Vedic attitude of their Master and by abusing the method of abstruse discussion which He had employed against the sophists, drifted into nihilism

which was by that time a recognised body of opinion handed down by a regular chain of former teachers. The active impulse which had produced the *yajna* form of worship was restated by Buddha to counteract its abuse at the hands of the fruitive school of the Vedists, so as to include ethical conduct. But Buddha's followers separated ethics from its theistic purpose and applied it in its purely mundane form to the attainment of a negative spiritual result. This misunderstanding the active principle underlying the method of worshipping Godhead by *yajna* as practised by the early theists, by those who professed to follow Buddha, was fraught with far-reaching consequences to humanity from the effects of which the modern world is still grievously suffering.

Just as the intellectual distortion of the principle underlying *yajna* led to the atheistical ethics of the pseudo-Buddhists, a somewhat similar distortion of the principle underlying Vishnuvite *archana* led to the development of the cult of the Jains.

The *archana* as the method of Divine worship was elaborated in the *Āgama* consisting of its twenty-four *Samhitās*. The *Vedas* are in old Sanskrit and were for that reason called the *Nigama*. The *Āgama* was so named as having been written in the then new language to distinguish it from the *Nigama*. The Vishnuvite *Āgama* bears the name of *Pancharātra*. The *Pancharātra* contains the rules for the regulation of the spiritual life of the Vaishnavas. These are the *sāttvika Tantras*. There are also *rājasa* and *tāmasa Tantras*.

The term *Pancharātra* means that which contains knowledge about the five subjects, viz., *tāpa*, *pundra*, *nāma*, *mantram* and worship. It is the *sāttvata* or Vishnuvite *Tantra*. The term *Tantra*, which means that which elaborates, is ordinarily applied to the *rājasa* and *tāmasa Tantras*. The *Pancharātra* instructs regarding the application of those theistic principles which are declared in the spiritual portion of the *Vedas*, illustrated concretely in the narratives of the *Purānas* and collated in the *Sutras*.

All those are the extensions of the real *Veda*. If the *Veda* is conceived as a person the *Upanishads* may be regarded as his intellect and the *Vedāngas* as his different organs for the performance of his function (*karmāṅga*). The *Vedāngas* are six in number, viz., (1) *Sikshā*, i.e., intonation, (2) *Kalpa*, i.e., proce-

dure, (3) *Nirukta*, i.e., dictionary, (4) *Vyākaraṇa*, i.e., the science of sound, (5) *Jyotiṣha*, i.c., astronomy including astrology dealing with space, time and direction, and (6) *Chandas*. These furnished the starting point of the various physical sciences of the subsequent rationalistic Age in which there was a great advance in practical facilities of all kinds.

The aphoristic literature which took upon itself the collation of the *Vedāngas*, led to the *Gṛihya* and *Srauta sutras*, the forerunners of the *Pancharātra* or the *Tantra* literature.

The *Dharmashāstras* or *Smritis* belong to a later period. The twenty *Dharmashāstras*, which are also divided into the *sāttvika*, *rājasa* and *tāmasa*, are concerned with the regulation of the whole life of individuals. The *sāttvika smritis*, viz., those of Vashīṣṭa, Harita, Vyāsa, Parāśara, Bharadvāja, Kasyapa, are categorically distinguished from the rest. The clue to this distinction is furnished by such old shlokas as state definitely the principle that the king possessed the authority to frame laws for the regulation of the secular affairs of the people but had no power over the Brāhmaṇas and the Vaishnavas. "Sarvatrāskhālitādesah saptadrivipakadandadhrik Anyatra brāhmaṇakulādanyatrāchyutagotratāh." (Bk. 4.XXI.12.) The *rājasa* and *tāmasa Dharmashāstras* were made by royal authority and are of a miscellaneous and secular character. They had no jurisdiction over the intellectual communities. The *Dharmashāstras* do not belong to the class of revealed literature. The *Pancharātras* bear the names of persons to whom they were spoken by Nārāyaṇa and are in the form of conversations between Siva and Pārvati.

The *Pancharātras* are thus an authoritative expansion and supplement of the *Veda* (Truth or Absolute knowledge) in the same way as the *Purāṇas*. There are very early statements in the body of the technical Vedic literature itself to the effect that the *Purāṇas* are an integral part of the revealed literature. Those passages have been pointed out by the later Vishnuvite Āchāryas. It is specifically stated in the *Mahābhārata* and by Manu that the *Veda* should be supplemented by the 'Itihāsa' (History) and the 'Purāṇa'. Because the *Veda* is supplemented by the *Purāṇa*, therefore the latter is called 'Purāṇa'. The *Mādhyandin Smriti* classes

'Itihāsa' and *'Purāna'* with the Vedic *Samhitās*, as forming the body of the revealed literature.

The principal *sāttvata*, i.e., theistic or Vishnuvite, *Pancharātra* or *Tāntric*, works are the *Hayasirsha*, *Prahlaḍa* and, especially, *Nārada*, *Pancharātra*. The names of the six *sāttvata Purānas* are *Vishnu*, *Nārada*, *Bhāgavata*, *Garuḍa*, *Padma* and *Varāha*. The six *rājasa Purānas* are named *Brahmānda*, *Brahmavaivarta*, *Mārkandeya*, *Bhabishyat*, *Vāmana* and *Brahma*. The *tāmasa Purānas* are *Matsya*, *Kurma*, *Linga*, *Siva*, *Skanda* and *Agni*. The *sāttvika Purānas* are stated to confer emancipation, the *rājasa* lead to paradise, and the *tāmasa* to hell. This principle holds in regard to the *Tantras*. The distinction between *sāttvika*, *rājasika* and *tāmasika shāstras* is also defined in another way. The *sāttvika shāstras* are those that establish that Godhead is full of all the Qualities and is the Highest of all. Those *shāstras* that declare the superiority of *Brahmā*, *Agni* and *Saraswati*, are *rājasika*. Those that state the superiority of *Siva* and recommend the *Sivalingam* as object of worship, are *tāmasika Tantras*. *Sāttvika* persons worship *Vishnu*, *rājasika* persons *Brahmā* and the *tāmasika* worship *Rudra* (*vide Padma* and *Garuḍa Purānas*). The superiority of the *sāttvika Purānas* is nowhere explicitly challenged.

The position we have reached so far may be summarised as follows. Godhead is the Divine Person Who is supernatural, supersensual and situated beyond the utmost limits of empiric knowledge. Knowledge is of two kinds, viz., (1) *parā*, i.e., transcendental or absolute, and (2) *aparā*, that is, non-final. *Rik*, *Sāman*, *Yajus*, *Atharva* and *Sikshā*, *Kalpa*, *Vyākaranā*, *Nirukta*, *Chandas* and *Jyotisha*, etc., and all those branches of knowledge that follow these, belong to the category of the *aparā-Vidyā*. But Godhead is never accessible to this limiting knowledge which is subject to modification by time. The *shāstras* in which the Unchangeable and Absolute Entity is the subject-matter of investigation, belong to the category of '*parā-Vidyā*'. The *sāttvata shāstras* belong to this class.

Thus theistic knowledge is found to be present, only to a very slight extent, in the extant Vedic *Samhitās* and their adjective literature. The originals of those parts of the Vedic works from which the *sāttvata Purānas* once derived their theistic accounts

have almost wholly disappeared in course of time, having become obsolete, probably on account of the Sanskritisation of those works in the form of the present Purānas. Therefore, the present Purānas, although they happen to be in modern garb, preserve the theistic tradition, the Vedic or old linguistic sources of which are for some reason or other not available to us at present. But the narratives contained in these Purānas belong to a period that is also anterior to the period of the compilation of the Rik Samhitā by an immense interval of time. Among the Sutra works we are fortunate in possessing a few that are theistic, viz., those made by Sāndilya, Bharadvāja and several other Rishis. The Bhikshu Sutra and Karmandi Pārāsariya Sutra were written long before the Vyāsa Sutra. The *bhakti* sutras became current at the time of the composition of the present *sāttvata* Pāncharātra works. The *sāttvata* sutras are composed in a way that is different from that of the *rājasika* and *tāmasika* Tantras. The lines of thought designated as Bhāgavata, Vaishnava, Naishkarma, Baikhānasa, Pāncharātrika, etc., were prevalent in the pre-Vedic period. Thereafter, when the theistic thought suffered a partial eclipse by the preponderance of philosophical schools that were addicted to materialistic methods, the old theistic tradition was revived in the form of the present Purānas.

The atheistic rationalism which subsequently culminated in historical Buddhism, was already in existence as early as the period of the Nrisingha and Vāmana *Avatāras*. Henotheism and pantheism of the Vedic and cognate schools present the polytheistic or positive aspect of this line of thought which is negatively represented by historical Buddhism and Jainism and, later in a masked form, by Sankara who recognised and clearly brought out the philosophical affinity between the two branches of the same line of thought and thus re-established friendly relationship between the two groups.

This atheistical pseudo-rationalism in its palmy days also coincided with the period of the triumphs of the Indian intellect in the different fields of empiric knowledge. This would not appear to be very wonderful if we consider the present state of affairs in Europe. The Protestant movement degenerated into commercialism and the almost exclusive pursuit of material well-being which

has given its secular tone to present Western society. Great material prosperity is not a necessary indication of progress in spiritual science. Devotion to material facilities may be rewarded by success which, if it be not controlled by a clear spiritual purpose, may be of the nature of a nemesis to confirm the successful person and community in their unspiritual course. The salutary aim should be not merely to juxtapose the two but to subordinate the material to the spiritual. This has never yet been practically possible in the world.

Indian thought may be the subject of study in both its theistic and atheistic aspects under which latter is included, unfortunately, its secular systems. Those who lament that the absence of material prosperity of India to-day is due to its exclusive spiritual pre-occupation, may do well to take note of this. The theistic thought proper cannot be subordinate to the aim of material improvement. The two do not equate at all, being on different planes. A community that adopts the theistic course will be purified in its morals, improved in unity and direct all its energies to those activities that are conducive to spiritual progress. It will be contented and orderly in all its parts in as much as it will have a common objective which is situated outside the limits of all clashing, temporary interests. There should be no limited, conflicting interests in a community regulated by the higher principle. Such a society will possess all the requisites of spiritual well-being which will prevent it from being disturbed by the operation of any unbridled disruptive ambitions of its constituent units. The nature of the ideal of one universal community will become clearer as the spiritual position itself clarifies in course of this narrative. It is, however, necessary to guard against possible misconception at the outset in view of current and deep-seated prejudices against religion for purely worldly reasons.

The political greatness of Magadha belongs to the Age of the progress of Indian empiric knowledge. The Purānas lament the final corruption of politics in the hands of the 'upstart' Kings of Magadha who favoured the indiscriminate subordination of the spiritual to the secular authority in defiance of the methods of the theistic periods. Under the kings of the dynasties of Magadha Buddhism became the official and the predominant religion of

India. But India progressed materially. Secular progress also characterized Indian society under the Gupta Emperors who belonged officially to the henotheistic cult of *panchopāsanā* or the worship of five principal gods, *viz.*, Sakti, the Sun, Ganapati, Siva and Vishnu.

This worship of five gods (*panchopāsanā*) is the religion of the large majority of the 'Hindus' of the present day and requires a few words of comment as regards its origin and character and its place in the general scheme of religious evolution.

This worship by the fivefold orthodox Hindu community, corresponding to the five gods, *viz.*, the Sāktas, Sauras, Gānapatyas, Saivas, and henotheistic (*panchopāsaka*) Vaishnavas, has prevailed in India from the remotest antiquity.

The tendencies of the human mind are of two kinds, *viz.*, (1) those that are directed towards material objects, and (2) those that are turned towards the highest good. From the first of these issue such activities as those undertaken for the nourishment of the body, the building of a home, marriage, production of offspring, the pursuit of different secular studies, the earning of wealth, physical sciences, arts, government and the accumulation of merit by good deeds, etc., etc. Many of these worldly activities of men are identical with those of the lower animals; but the purposive utilitarian efforts of man are superior to similar instinctive endeavours of the lower animals. But men, even although they may carry on all efforts and acts conducive to worldly advantage, are considered to be only two-legged animals unless they make an attempt to place themselves under the guidance of their spiritual nature. The function of the pure soul is the natural religion of all animate beings. In the natural state the function that is proper to the soul is fully manifest. In the bound state this natural function, or religion, is reduced to the form of 'quest' after the highest good. The worldly activities already mentioned attain their fulfilment only if they are performed in subordination to the spiritual purpose; otherwise they fail to establish the highest position of man. Therefore, the first appearance of the effort for the highest good, differentiating itself from the exclusive pursuit of worldly interests, may be termed as a slight turning towards

Godhead. From this stage to the highest spiritual state there is an infinity of gradations.

The *Sākta* religion is the name of the search of Godhead in the material world. In this religion material Nature is observed to be recognised as the supreme Regulatrix of the world. The customs and practices that are enjoined in the *Sākta* religion (*dharma*) are suitable for the stage of slight Godwardness. In regard to worldly people who have not yet begun to enquire after the highest good the customs recommended by the *Sākta dharma* may prove attractive and help to bring them over to the principle of the *summum bonum*. The religion that worships material energy is, indeed, the first spiritual effort of the bound soul and is extremely beneficial for people situated at that stage.

When the Godward tendency has acquired strength, in the second stage of advance, the superiority and efficacy of heat among material objects being noticed, the Sun as the source of all heat is accepted as the object of worship. This leads to the origin of the Saura cult. Subsequently, when even heat also comes to be regarded as material and lifeless, the principle of animation is recognised as superior to it and gives rise to the worship of Ganesa, who represents the principle of animality. This is the third stage. In the fourth stage, the pure human consciousness comes to be worshipped as Siva and gives rise to the Saiva creed. In the fifth stage appears the Vaishnava religion or the worship of the Supreme Soul as different from the fractional soul of the individual.

The religion that seeks the highest good is naturally divided into the above five grades. Therefore, in all countries these five religions have been prevalent in the different periods under different names. If we consider all the different religions that are current in this and other countries they can be put under one or other of the above classes. The Christian and Muhammedan bear a strong affinity to the Vaishnava religion of the henotheistic (*panchopāsaka*) school. Buddhism and Jainism are similar to the Saiva cult. This is the scientific explanation of the differences between the different religions. Those who regard their own particular religion as the only true religion and stigmatise other religions as irreligion or pseudo-religion, are disabled by such prejudices from

ascertaining the real Truth. As a matter of fact, having regard to the different stages, the respective religions should be considered as really different. But the religion that is natural to the soul is only one. In the graded condition of humanity it is not the duty of those who look to the essence of the matter to ignore this inevitable gradation of religion. In undertaking this discussion of the natural religion of the proper self of all animate beings we have no desire of withholding regard that is due to the respective grades of the different religions, in their natural and scientific order of precedence.

The eternal (*sāttvata*) theistic function (Vaishnava *dharma*) is the only religion (*dharma*) that is proper to the soul; or, in other words, it is the eternal religion of all animation. But the Vaishnava religion that is found to exist in the community which professes illusionism (*māyāvāda*) is only a caricature of the religion of the pure soul. The so-called Vaishnava religion of the henothistic (*panchopāsaka*) school when it becomes free from mundane references, that is to say, from illusionism (*māyāvāda*), thereby attains to the nature of the eternal function (*sāttvata dharma*). The distinction due to Dualism, Dualistic-non-Dualism, Absolute Monism and Distinctive Monism, professed respectively by the four theistic schools of the pure Vaishnavas, are merely indicative of the diversified character of the Vaishnava thought itself. This difference of school (*sampradāya*) is not due to any real difference of principle. *Māyāvāda* is the one creed which is really opposed to the principle of devotion. Those Vaishnavas who profess *Māyāvāda* are not theistic Vaishnavas at all.

The religious systems educed out of the perception of physical Nature, always fortified themselves by reference to old precedents and the Veda or the revealed Word. The philosophical systems which assumed their regular form in the *sutra* period, elaborated in the commentaries, furnished them with ready-made arguments, justifying their particular methods of worship and doctrine. All these were interconnected by their unity of outlook which was mundane and with the fruitive works and the gods and goddesses of the *karmakāndiya* portions of the Veda and of the *Tantras* that were not spiritual. This is the tangled web of the

current religious (?) life of India. It possesses an external appearance of being based upon the general body of the Scriptures of this country although showing a variety of faces that are by no means easily reconcilable with one another. Any systematic friendly treatment of current Hinduism is the despair alike of historians and philosophers. But in spite of their absurdities, their materialism which is often frankly explicit and their want of internal homogeneity, they have always impressed both outside and inside critics as presenting only the exterior or the covering matter that hides the sterling truth lying buried underneath. There are real grounds for such suspicion.

We have dealt elsewhere with the non-theistical philosophical systems which arose during the *sutra* period or the beginning of the rationalistic Age and also with the Buddhistic and Jaina systems. The philosophy of theism was collated in the *Brahma sutra*, known also as the *Vedānta sutra*. The *Brahma sutra* produced its commentators through the agencies of both the theistic and non-theistic schools. The most famous, and one of the earliest extant, commentary belonging to the latter class, is that of Sankarāchārya in which he expounds the *Vedānta sutra* with wonderful dialectic skill to prove the exclusive monistic view. Armed with this, Sankara, by appealing to the authority of revealed theism, succeeded in patching up an apparent reconciliation among all the warring non-theistic creeds by throwing over them the deceptive coating of Illusionism and winning over even the followers of Buddhism, who had till then been openly hostile to the Vedic tradition, within its roomy fold. Although the other rival philosophical systems were not altogether driven out of the field and even continued to inspire the various non-theistic creeds, the superior logic of the system of Sankara secured more or less the approval of all non-theistic cults, especially as it tolerated and supported the practices of all of them, differing apparently only in regard to their methods in pursuance of the common end to be attained by those methods.

The effective and uncompromising opponent of Sankara was the Vishnuvite thought itself which could not be stamped out by Sankara. The commentaries of Sankara were refuted by Sree Rāmānuja and Madhvāchārya who re-stated the theistic position

by carefully exposing the errors of Sankara and laying bare his real object, which was different from his profession. Under the guise of loyalty to the revealed Word (*sruti*) Sankara proved even a greater enemy, on account of his profession of loyalty, of the theistic thought which was the real philosophy of the revealed Word, than even its open foes.

The Vishnuvite thought had been vigorously reinforced by the compilation of the two great epics, viz., the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which in their present forms contain a good deal of interpolated matter. The process which was in progress, of rewriting in the new Sanskrit language the contents of the older original books, furnished the opportunity, which was not missed by the opponents of the theistic thought, of consciously or unconsciously importing into the Vishnuvite Narrative of the Epics a good deal of the thoughts and ideas of the other creeds. The *Mahābhārata* was at once recognised by the Vishnuvite teachers as the text-book of their religion. The significance of the Teachings and Activities of Sree Krishna was, however, most fully and clearly brought out in Sreemad *Bhāgavata Purāna* which devoted itself exclusively to the task of finally separating the grain from the chaff and presenting the history of theism in its unadulterated and highest form of perfection embodied in the Teachings and Activities of Sree Krishna. Sreemad *Bhāgavatam* is the gathering up and the final and complete statement of the theistic position successively revealed in course of the Ages.

There is a class of thinkers, who without belonging to the school of successively heard transcendental sound, affect to value a religion in proportion to the antiquity of its origin. Revelation, according to such people, even if it were admitted as a true fact, by way of argument, could have taken place only in very remote times or at the very beginning of creation, and is, therefore, necessarily enshrined in the oldest (?) of all the extant Scriptures, viz., the Rik Samhitā. On this ground they are not disposed to regard as belonging to the class of revealed Scriptures any works that in their estimation appear to belong to an Age later than the Vedic. This view is directly opposed to such statements as that the Rik Veda itself is outside 'Brahma Vidya' or 'parā Vidya', the knowledge of the Absolute. We have tried to explain the

significance of such and similar statements that refuse to let the *Brahman* as transcendental Sound to be labelled, catalogued and finally closed in the manner that the physical scientist would like to do according to his limited notions that refer exclusively to the finite objects of this world. The 'Word of God' is not anything that is capable of being limited by space and time. That is also the reason why we are told that it is not possible for us to have any idea of Him except by the process of revelation. That which is unrelated to this world cannot be known by any kind of mundane reference, gross or subtle, physical or mental. Such prejudices, which the impartial voice of logic emphatically condemns, should be completely eradicated if we really want to acquire the spiritual perspective proper.

The Purānas, in their spiritual significance, are eternal. They are accordingly spoken of as appearing and disappearing, in accordance with the strict logic of unadulterated theism. The Age or country or person to which they choose to appear, does not in the least affect their eternal character. They are neither old nor new but eternal, *i.e.*, situated beyond the scope of past, present and future. Unless this is remembered no one need pretend that he really accepts, tentatively or even for the sake of argument, the logical implications of theism. The exoteric side which alone is present to the view of limited minds represents the misleading view of the Absolute. This exoteric vision requires to be temporarily discarded in order to be able to loyally follow a theistic narrative that is derived from unimpeachable sources and for that reason alone entitled to such hearing from every one of us, for our own benefit.

In the light of the above observations it is possible to understand the meaning of those passages of the Scriptures that try to define the position of Sreemad *Bhāgavatam*. It is the only uncontaminated source of the revealed religion in its purity and completeness, available to us. Sreemad *Bhāgavatam* is the explanation of the *Brahma sūtra*; it settles the significance of the *Mahābhārata*; it is of the nature of the commentary of the formula for delivering from worldliness (*gāyatri*), the transcendental Sound Who is, as it were, the germ of all knowledge regarding the Absolute; and is the fulfilment of all the statements of the Vedas. 'The sub-

stance of all the philosophy of the Vedas is called Sreemad *Bhāgavatam*. Suka churned the butter from the curd of the four Vedas and Parikshit ate of the same. After Sree Krishna returned to His own Abode the Sun in the shape of this Purāna has arisen of late for the enlightenment of the blinded souls of this Age of discord.' The position of the Sreemad *Bhāgavatam* as being the premier among the *sāttvata* Purānas is attested by various passages in the different Purānas.

The historian who may be obsessed by his partiality for antiquity, being so wedded to the cult of time and space as to be unable to live in the pure atmosphere that is free from those dark vapours of this mundane world, should do well to take the help of those philosophers who possess a longer vision than his and who may warn him against riding an old error too hard as it is bound to expire in the process, if, indeed, it be his purpose to preserve it for the particular benefit of nobody.

This is so as regards the so-called historical position of Sreemad *Bhāgavatam*. The nature of the actual contents of this unique work cannot be indicated in a few words. By the side of the revealed Word the *Avatāras* of Vishnu constitute a Source of transcendental knowledge forming the truly historical manifestation of the Word of God. The Word of Godhead tells us about Godhead, His Activities, Qualities, Abode and Servitors. The *Avatāras* are the descent of these into this world in a shape that is visible to all of us in the forms of apparent mundane occurrences, by reason of the mundane nature of our present vision. The revealed Word is explained and corroborated by the narrative of the deeds of the *Avatāras*. If the *gāyatri* is comparable to the first appearance of the bud, Sreemad *Bhāgavatam* is like the full-blown flower, being the inspired narrative of the successive *Avatāras* of Vishnu, culminating in the advent of Sree Krishna Himself, into this world.

Sree Krishna Chaitanya's career and teaching offers the illustration of the Vaishnava religion in its highest development. The *saṅkirtana* of Krishna propounded by Sree Chaitanya is the highest form of worship of this religion, being equivalent to the loving service of Sree Krishna, as practised by the milk-maids of Braja, the form itself being the method as well as the object of

this transcendental worship. The nature of these will be explained in course of the narrative.

But we would avail of this opportunity to ask the reader not to accept the current practices of the pseudo-followers of Sree Chaitanya in Bengal and elsewhere as the religion taught by Sree Chaitanya. We would also request him to forget what is offered in the pages of certain modern writers as the so-called *history* of the movement. Both are concoctions of the imaginations of people who are themselves utterly ignorant of the transcendental nature of the spiritual function. Such travesty of the Truth as is offered by the pseudo-Vaishnavas and empiric writers, is the necessary consequence of attempting to practise and explain the religion by worldly people, in as much as its nature cannot be understood by the limited intelligence of persons leading a worldly life who may give themselves out to be the followers of Sree Chaitanya or who may be betrayed by their self-sufficiency born of utter ignorance to undertake to write its history. We may quote again the dictum of Sree Chaitanya, which is so apposite in this connection, *viz.*, 'no one is fit to teach the religion who does not practise it himself.'

The psilanthropic (*prākṛita sahajīā*) cult passing under the name of Vaishnavism, is allied to the practices of those who follow the teaching of the *tāmasika Tantras*. This class of *Tantras*, which had their zealous followers in the tracts of Chittagong (*Chattogrāma*), led in those parts to the practice of revolting sexual excesses in the name of religion, and from there the contagion was carried to different parts of the country which also had their own *tāmasika Tantrikas* by whom they were welcomed. This feature of decadent Buddhism is quite well known. The natural transcendental function (*aprākṛita sahaja dharma*) that finds expression in the genuine poems of Chandidās and Vidyāpati, which were approved by Sree Chaitanya, belongs to the category of unalloyed devotion to Godhead. But those songs that now pass under the names of Vidyāpati and Chandidās have suffered interpolation and alteration in the hands of the sensualists of former and present generations. The sensual feature is altogether absent from the practices recommended by Sree Chaitanya both by His own conduct as well as by His teachings. But many pseudo-sects that profess at the present day to be the followers of Sree Chaitanya

try to pass off the sensual cult as the religion of pure love for God-head taught by Sree Chaitanyaadeva. The congregational chanting (*samkirtana*) as performed by these pseudo-Vaishnavas is nothing but a musical dissipation that falls in with their other taste for unbridled sexuality. It will appear in its due place in this narrative that the congregational chanting (*samkirtanam*) propounded by Sree Krishna-Chaitanya is something that is altogether different, both as regards its method and object, from what now ordinarily passes under its name. In the concluding chapter of this work we will return to the details of the history and shall try to supply the reader with the real account of the development of pseudo-*samkirtana* among the sensualists. The process of misrepresenting the pure Vishnuvite religion by pseudo-followers and opponents in the various forms of pseudo-Vaishnavism and non-Vaishnavism, which operated with such signal consequences in the past, have not been less active during the four centuries that have elapsed since the disappearance of Sree Chaitanya, to obscure and misrepresent the religion of pure love for Godhead, taught and practised by Him.

The history of India, written too exclusively by ethnologists and archaeologists, has left out of account the factor that really matters, *viz.*, the substance of its spiritual culture which possesses a continuous and recoverable history. Much work for the elucidation of the religious history of India has been done by foreign empiric scholars whose judgment cannot, however, be relied upon in essential matters which are doubly opposed to their experience and local mode of life. The 'Orion' of Bālgangādhar Tilak made a nearer approach to the true method. But Tilak was swept off his legs by his association with physical efforts, to the detriment of his intellectual and theological speculations. Those who are sincerely anxious to work in the field of spiritual culture must first of all get rid of all lesser considerations than the Absolute Truth, both in their intellectual and worldly lives, as 'he alone is fit to be a teacher of the religion who also practises the same'.

The History of India of the pre-Christian period is still enveloped in the darkness of obscurity. But from the mediæval period we are on firmer ground. There is no lack of materials from firsthand informants in writing the life of Sree Chaitanya.

I shall conclude this chapter with a few words of observation on the system of caste. Sree Chaitanya is wrongly supposed to have been an opponent of the caste-system. As a matter of fact Sree Chaitanya kept strictly aloof from secular society and politics. He never encouraged social rupture in any form. Spiritual society, according to Sree Chaitanya, is only camp-life. Theists alone are in a position to live such a life. Sree Chaitanya called unto Himself particular individuals from all ranks of the then existing society. He formed the spiritual association of such individuals. His householder-followers did not bring over the members of their households, nor their relatives, into the religion. It is not a hereditary community that can be formed on the spiritual basis. It was also, therefore, a proselytizing religion in its external appearance. Several of its leading Āchāryas came from the lowest ranks of the orthodox society or even from outside. Thākūr Haridās was a Muhammedan by birth.

The subject of '*varna*' hinges on the answer to the question 'Who is a *Brāhmaṇa*?' There are numerous passages in the Scriptures which contain a clear answer to the question. There is a long discussion on this point in the *Vajrasuchikopanishad* which, after rejecting for different reasons answers that identify the *Brāhmaṇa* with (1) the individual soul himself, (2) the physical body, (3) the species, (4) the cognitive principle, (5) the principle of activity, arrives at the conclusion that the *Brāhmaṇa* is the possessor of certain qualities. 'He knows the real nature of the self and by reason of such knowledge remains always free from any defects due to greed, anger, etc., is possessed of equanimity and self-control, is uninfluenced by caprices, malice, thirst, desire or infatuation, with mind unaffected by arrogance, egotism, etc. This is the purpose of the *Sṛuti*, *Smṛiti*, *Itihāsa* and the *Purāṇas*. No other view of *Brāhmaṇism* is tenable.' In the *Chanddogya Upanishad* we have the following, "Gautama said, 'Fairlooking one, to which lineage (*gotra*) do you belong?' " He answered, "I do not know to which *gotra* I belong. I asked my mother. She said to me, 'In my youth in course of ministering to many persons as their servant, I begot you as my son. I do not really know to which *gotra* you belong. My name is Jabala. Your name is Satyakāma. I am thus Satyakāma Jābala.'" To this Gautama replied,

'Child, the truth which you have spoken cannot be given out by any one who is not a *Brāhmaṇa*. Therefore, are you *Brāhmaṇa*. I accept you, good-looking one; collect the requisites for the performance of the formal rites of the occasion. I will admit you as pupil for the study of the Scriptures. (I will invest you with the sacrificial thread of a *Brāhmaṇa*.) Do not fall away from the truth.' This attitude of Gautama is thus described in the *Sāman Samhita*, 'In a *Brāhmaṇa* straightforward sincerity and in a *Sudra* crookedness respectively, are to be found. Hāridrumata Gautama by considering this difference of quality bestowed on Satyakāma the right of the *Brāhmaṇa* to study the Scriptures (*upanayana*), or purification by the *gāyatri*.' "We do not know whether we are *Brāhmaṇas* or non-*Brāhmaṇas*," this doubt arose in the minds of the truth-loving Rishis" (text of the *Sṛuti* quoted by Nilakantha). In the *Geeta* Sree Krishna says, "I have created the four *varnas* in accordance with difference in the qualities and works of different persons. Although I am the Lord, know Me as not the Creator of those institutions." That is to say, the institutions of '*varna*' and '*ashrama*' are created by the deluding energy of Godhead Who in His proper Nature is indifferent to them. In the *Purāṇas* and in *Mahābhārata* there are long lists of persons who acquired the status of *Brāhmaṇas* although they were not born in *Brāhmaṇa* families. The principle underlying the institution is stated most clearly in a *shloka* of the *Mahābhārata* (*Anusāsana parva*, 143—50, 51) which may be rendered thus, 'Birth, purificatory ceremony, the study of the Vedas or descent,—none of these is the cause of the status of the twice-born; one's disposition is the *only* cause. If a *Sudra* is found to possess the proper disposition, he attains to the condition of the *Brāhmaṇa*.' This *britta-Brāmanatā*, or *Brāmanahood by disposition*, is the real principle underlying the division into *varnas*, and is attested by numerous passages that are to be found in all the Scriptures. While there is not a single passage which declares that *Brāmanahood* is due to birth alone, there are other passages which declare the inevitable loss of the status of a *Brāhmaṇa* and lapse into that of a *Sudra* with deterioration of disposition.

In the case of the *Brāhmaṇa* there are three births. The first of these is the seminal birth on coming out of the womb of

the mother. After the *upanayana* (bringing of the boy to the preceptor, *i.e.*, entrance into pupilage for Vedic studies) the second birth takes place; and, thereafter, on the attainment of initiation into the sacrifice, the third birth occurs (*Manu*, 2|260). Thus there are three kinds of birth, *viz.*, (1) seminal (*shaukra*), (2) through *gāyatri* (*sārvitrya*), and (3) through initiation (*daikshya*). This is expressed by the word *tribrit* which means these three kinds of birth. If a person, born in a *Brāhmaṇa* family, remaining ignorant of the *Veda*, or the Truth regarding the Divinity, manifest extreme arrogance on the strength of his possession of the sacrificial thread, by right of seminal birth, for such *sin* that *Brāhmaṇa* is designated by the name of 'animal' (*pashu*) (*Atri Samhitā, shloka 372*). According to *Manu*, 2|168, the twice-born who, without devoting himself to the study of the *Vedas*, applies himself to other matters, becomes thereby a *Sudra* even during his lifetime with his whole family. The *Padma-purāṇa* defines the term *Brāhmaṇa-bruva* (pseudo-*Brāhmaṇa*). "The *Brāhmaṇa* who after undergoing purification (?) by the ten-fold *samskāra* does not perform either the eternal (*nitya*) or adventitious (*naimittika*) functions, is called a '*Brāhmaṇa-bruva*'. That twice-born person who having undergone *niyama*, *brata* and all the *samskāras* does not yet perform any of the duties enjoined by the *Vedas*, is a *Brāhmaṇa-bruva* (pseudo-*Brāhmaṇa*). If a person, who has obtained purification (*samskāra*) and the sacrificial thread, neglects the regular performance of duties that are enjoined and does not study the *Vedas*, he is to be considered a *Brāhmaṇa-bruva* (pseudo-*Brāhmaṇa*). He who does not himself study the highest *Veda-shāstras* nor teaches them to disciples, although such a person may happen to possess the tenfold *samskāra* (purification), is nevertheless a *Brāhmaṇa-bruva* (pseudo-*Brāhmaṇa*)."

This is confirmed by Kulluka Bhatta in his remarks on *Manu*, 7-85, "the person born of a *Brāhmaṇa* family who, although devoid of the performance of the duties proper for a *Brāhmaṇa*, passes himself off as a *Brāhmaṇa*, is designated by the term '*Brāhmaṇa-bruva*' (pseudo-*Brāhmaṇa*)," etc., etc.

The position is thus summed up in a *shloka* of the *Sreemad Bhāgavatam* (7-11-35), 'by those signs that have been enumerated, which indicate the respective *varnas* of men, the *varna* of a person

is to be settled.' This is corroborated by *Mahābhārata*, *Sānti parva*, 189-8. The *varna* institution as found in the Scriptures is an individualistic classification of man according to disposition. The necessity for such institution is thus stated, 'Divine Vishnu is worshipped by a person who practises the functions (*dharma*) enjoined by the institutions of *varna* and *asrama*. There is no other way of pleasing Him than by such activities as are enjoined by the institutions of *varna* and *asrama*. In the *Satya Yuga* there was only *one varna*. The division into *four varnas* was made in the *Treta Age*. In the *Kali Age* cannibals (*rākshasas*) are born in the *Brāhmaṇa* families for troubling those whose tenfold purification (*samskāra*), pursuit of Vedic studies, etc., have lost their vitality.' Accordingly 'as in the *Kali Age* Brāhmaṇas by seminal birth do not possess any purity and are like the *Sudras* they are not purified by following the Vedic path. They are purified by the *pāncharātric* method alone'. 'Because just as by some particular chemical process the bell-metal is transformed into gold in the same way by the *sāttvata Tāntric* *dikshā* (elaborated spiritual initiation) *every one* is enabled to acquire the nature of a *Bīpra*.' The words of *Digdarsini*, quoted by Sree Sanātana Goswāmi, declare that the status of a twice-born belongs to all men after initiation.

Initiation (*dikshā*) is of two kinds, *viz.*, (1) Vedic, and (2) in conformity with the Vedas. Of these the second is again of two kinds, *viz.*, (1) *Paurānic*, or (2) *Pāncharātric*. The difference between them consists in this that the Vedic *dikshā* is the initiation of the duly purified twice-born considered as a fit person for receiving spiritual enlightenment. The *Paurānic* *dikshā* is initiation of an unfit person on the assumption of fitness. The *Pāncharātric* *dikshā* is the initiation of an unfit person with the object of ensuring his fitness. Of these the Vedic initiation is ruled out as inadmissible in the *Kali Age*. Sree *Haribhaktivilās* gives the preference to the *Pāncharātric* (*tāntric*) *dikshā* over the *Paurānic*. The *dikshā* of *Sudras* formulated by the *smārtas*, who belong to the creed of the *panchopāsakas* and who favour exclusively the principle of seminal descent, is not entitled to be called *dikshā* in any sense. At the time of Sree Chaitanya the *Pāncharātric* *dikshā* alone was in use as the *Panchopāsaka* (*i.e.*, atheistic)

smārtas had not been able to obtain such a great influence over society by that period as they have now. The subsequent disuse of the *Pāncharātric dikshā* by the so-called Vaishnava Āchāryas of a later day who were under the thumb of the *smārtas*, will be described in due course.

'*Diksha* is so called by savants well versed in the knowledge of the Divinity because it confers the spiritual knowledge (*i.e.*, the knowledge of one's relationship with Godhead) and destroys sinfulness with its root-cause.' The *upanayana* corresponds to matriculation or admission into the path of the true knowledge. The *dikshā* corresponds to graduation, *i.e.*, the actual attainment of the enlightened state, or, according to the *Pāncharātric* method, its actual attainment in the future if the conditions enjoined by the process are fulfilled. One becomes a *Brāhmaṇa* on the attainment of such knowledge. It is this spiritual status that is referred to in such passages as in *Brihad.*, 3-9-10, 'Gargi, he who having known the Divine Truth thereafter leaves this world is alone a *Brāhmaṇa*', and *Brihad.*, 4-4-21, 'the intelligent *Brāhmaṇa* having learnt about the Brahman from the Scriptures will endeavour to cultivate love for Him'. Thereupon he is called Vaishnava, as being *related* to Vishnu. The Vaishnava is thus higher than all the *varnas*. The condition of the *Brāhmaṇa* is included in and surpassed by that of the Vaishnava.

Britta-Brāhmanata (the status of the *Brāhmaṇa* by disposition) is the condition precedent to the attainment of the higher status of the Vaishnava or servant of Vishnu, in accordance with the teaching of the Scriptures. The status of a *Brāhmaṇa* resting on seminal birth alone is nowhere mentioned in the Scriptures. One of the very first steps that is required for the re-establishment of the spiritual (*daiva*) *varnāśrama* institution is to make *britta-Brāhmanata* the legal institution in order to ensure its practical recognition as the genuine Scriptural institution by all communities and the re-establishment of this proper gradation in the Vaishnava communities (*sampradāyas*). The form of *britta-Brāhmanatā* is prevalent in the Rāmānandi community. It is the basis of the arrangement laid down in the *Satkriyāsāradipikā*.

The *Brāhmaṇo* movement, which at one time applied itself to the reform of religion in Bengal, has now become almost a purely

social movement and has cut itself completely away from the revealed Scriptures. Its founder Rājā Rāmmohan Roy became latterly inclined towards mundane facilities. It is such worldly considerations that also lie at the root of the subsequent split in the *Brāhma* community. The intellectual vigour which at one time distinguished the community has practically left it and gone over to the Theosophists who are careful not to commit themselves in spiritual matters to anything definite. The position of the Theosophists is the intellectual counterpart of the social ideal of the Brāhmīs to which the latter attach supreme importance. The Brāhmīs want to do away with caste, as it stands in the way of mundane facilities. But organised society is in every sense better than indiscriminate individualism. The Brāhma programme offers only the individualistic in place of the communal. All mundane systems have their special defects. No real progress towards the spiritual state is possible by the adoption of such a course. What is needed is not to ignore the spiritual, and substitute in its place the material and worldly, but to acknowledge the spiritual and try sincerely to follow its lead in arranging our temporary affairs of this world.

The one method of attaining to the spiritual is by listening to the history of Godhead Who frequently comes down into this world in order, by His activities made visible to this world, to afford the bound *jīvas* the opportunity of having the transcendental in the very midst of the mundane. Such history is necessarily unintelligible to the bound *jīva* and, therefore, it has to be listened to from the lips of *sādhus* who can alone understand and properly expound it. By listening constantly to the narrative of the transcendental pastimes of the Divinity recorded in the Scriptures from the lips of *sādhus* who themselves live the spiritual life bound *jīvas* are enabled gradually to attain to the consciousness of their real spiritual nature.

In the next chapter we intend accordingly to present the reader with a brief explanatory account of the Descents (*Avatāras*) of Godhead. After one's spiritual nature is freed from the delusions of this material world he is in a position to understand what the service of Godhead really means. The life of Sree Krishna Chaitanya Who is the living Embodiment of the very highest form of

service, cannot be really intelligible to bound *jivas* unless they are prepared to undergo spiritual novitiate at the feet of real devotees in the manner prescribed by the Word of Godhead and exemplified in all its stages, from its first beginning to the highest development, in the life of Sree Krishna Chaitanya. This is the truth of the life of Sree Chaitanya. It is indispensable to the bound *jiva* to be properly acquainted with it if he is disposed to attain to and continue in the state of the pure service of Godhead. The one thing needful for us all is, therefore, to listen to the Divine history from the lips of *sādhus*, to chant the same and to act in strict conformity with its teaching after the manner taught by and exemplified in the life of Sree Krishna Chaitanya.

IX. HISTORY OF DIVINE DESCENTS (*AVATĀRAS*)

THE term '*Avatāra*' means 'coming down' of the Divinity, Whose Nature is purely spiritual, into this material world, retaining fully His own transcendental Nature. Therefore, the English word 'Incarnation,' which means putting on of the material coil, is wholly inapplicable to the process. When Godhead actually chooses to come down into this world He appears to the view of bound *jīvas* as an animate being possessed of a physical body not essentially different from that of other bound *jīvas*. But Godhead, although He appears to them to belong to this world, does not really belong to this world at all. The deluding Energy of Godhead, who is instrumental in the creation of this world of limitations as the dwelling-place of individual souls that are averse to Godhead and who stunts their vision, has no power over Godhead Himself. Godhead is the Lord of the deluding Energy who is different from His spiritual Power. The deluding Energy herself is subordinate to God's own spiritual Power. The Form and everything pertaining to the personality of Godhead, belong eternally to the category of the spirit and are located above and beyond the jurisdiction of His illusory power. But in spite of the existence of eternal demarcation between Him and the realm of His deluding power, Godhead chooses to come down occasionally into the realm of physical Nature in the plenitude of His spiritual Power with all His eternal Paraphernalia and becomes actually visible to bound *jīvas* in whose sight He seems to appear not as spirit, because the spiritual essence transcends their power of vision, but in the likeness of a mundane phenomenon. The eternal servitors of Godhead who also appear in this world in His company, may alone have the sight of Him and His Activities as They really are. These manifestations of the Absolute, as Absolute, in the domain of this relative existence, are designated by the term '*Avatāra*'.

In the *Geeta* Sree Krishna says to Arjunā that He comes down repeatedly into this world and in this respect resembles the

bound *jīva* who is caught in the cycle of physical birth and rebirth. But there is a very great difference between the two processes. Sree Krishna is the Lord of all, has no physical birth and as regards His proper Nature He is absolutely unchangeable. He appears in this world through the medium of His spiritual Power. But the *jīvas* are born in this world being endowed with physical bodies for the purpose by the power of the deluding Energy (*māyā sakti*) as the result of their active aversion to Godhead. The Appearance of Godhead in this world in various forms, such as those of gods, reptiles, etc., is brought about by His Own Will. When He chooses to come down into this world His pure spiritual Body does not become enveloped in a double encasement of matter in the gross and subtle forms as in the case of the bound *jīva*. Godhead is simply pleased to make manifest in this world His own eternal spiritual Body that exists eternally in the Absolute Realm of Vaikuntha. If this appear incomprehensible to the limited reason of the bound *jīva* it is so for the reason that the Power of the Divinity is inconceivable and above all controversy. Therefore, the real nature of the Activities of Godhead are not at all ascertainable by the reason of the *jīva*. What the *jīva* can understand, if he chooses not to be perversely inclined, is that Godhead, Who is possessed of inconceivable Power, never becomes subject to the laws of physical Nature. The deluding power by which the bound *jīva* is controlled is also Divine. But the Divine power that belongs to Godhead is nevertheless always spiritual and is categorically different from material Energy. The Power of Godhead is one. As spiritual Power alone She is eligible to directly serve Godhead. As material Energy She has no access to the presence of Her Lord. The material Energy is subordinate to the spiritual Power, as shadow is subordinate to substance or as darkness to light. It is the function of the non-substantial deluding material energy to provide souls that are averse to Godhead with a shadowy world for their deluded existence.

The only law that governs the Descent (*Avatāra*) of Godhead into this world is the Divine Will. Godhead appears in this world when He wills. He chooses to appear in this world whenever there is any unbearable decline of religion leading to the prevalence of irreligion. The laws that govern the course of this material

world, as they proceed from the Will of Godhead, are irresistible. But in course of time when for some undefinable reason those laws suffer a change for the worse, due to defects bred by time, irreligion waxes strong. No one except Godhead Himself is able to set right those defects. Therefore, appearing in this world with His spiritual paraphernalia, the Supreme Lord puts down all such abnormal deterioration in religion.

Godhead manifests Himself in a twofold way. The creation of the spiritual and non-spiritual worlds and the regulation of them by inviolable laws, is one of these. The Activities of Godhead, as distinct from His creations, in these created worlds, constitute the second kind of His manifestations. Individual souls (*jivas*) are associates of the activities of Godhead. The successive manifestations of Godhead that appear to the view of the *jiva* in the material world, correspond respectively to those states that he happens to be in as the result of his meddling with matter, such activity itself being due to his falling away from his own proper spiritual nature by the prevalence of his desire for selfish enjoyment. His Infinite Kindness towards the fallen soul, is the only cause of the manifestations of Godhead in this world. These manifestations are called Divine Descents (*Avatāras*). From the stage that is anterior to the appearance of the spine in organisms to the appearance of the fully-developed man several great Rishis have recorded their observation of eight successive Descents of the Divinity, others have noticed eighteen, and a third group have observed twenty-four, Divine *Avatāras*. The well-known view of the Ten *Avatāras* is the one that is held by most Rishis who were versed in Divine science. Those Rishis postulate ten particular states through which the soul passes successively from the beginning to the end of each stage of his bondage. These are indicated by (1) absence of the spinal column, (2) appearance of the circular spine, (3) the elongated spine, (4) the vertical spine or the man-animal state, (5) the man of dwarfish stature, (6) man in the savage state, (7) civilised man, (8) intellectual man, (9) ultra-intellectual state, and (10) complete destruction of the unspiritual state. In accordance with these successively appearing historical states in the evolution of the bound state of the *jiva*, the ten *Avatāras*, viz., Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man-Lion,

Dwarf, Parasū Rāma, Rāma, Balarāma, Buddha and Kalki are observed as the corresponding Forms of the Divine Appearance. The narrative of Their Supernatural Activities is recorded in the Purānas and specially in Sreemad *Bhāgavatam*. Those specialists of the science of devotion, who have understood the nature of these Divine manifestations by means of intensive concentrated investigation, have, by the grace of Sree Krishna Chaitanya, been enabled to realise the Truth regarding Krishna and specially the unique exquisiteness of His *Braja*-pastimes. ‘Of all the pastimes of Krishna His human activities are the highest and His proper nature and His proper Form is the Human.’

The Descent of Divine Spiritual Power into the realm of the material energy, or, in other words, the manifestation of Godhead’s own spiritual Power in the apparent form of the manifestation of material Energy, is known as Divine Descent (*Avatāra*). By means of such Descent the association of the novice, on the path of spiritual life in this world, with the realm of the spirit, is effected and such association is the only way by which the person practising spiritual endeavour (*sādhaka*) is enabled to attain spiritual realisation.

It will be observed that the account of the ten *Avatāras* that correspond to the respective stages of the human mind in the course of the development of its spiritual consciousness, has been explained by means of terms that have recently been employed in the domain of physical science in connection with the evolution of the human physique from the first beginning of animal life in the *amāba*. From this apparent analogy the modern reader may scent, in the explanation recorded in the Scriptures, an unacknowledged and crude misapplication, to an irrelevant subject, of the truly scientific theory of the evolution of the physical form of animal life. Or, if he is at all inclined to recognise the priority of the Scriptures, he may be also led by a foregone conclusion to suppose that the *Myth* of the *Avatāras* might be connected with those periods that correspond to the respective stages in the evolution of the animal form, and are of value as a piece of antiquarian curiosity as a vague anticipation of the modern theory, that might have served its purpose in the past. Or, again, the doctrine of the tenfold Descent may lead the reader to suppose that it refers in some way to the progress of

material civilization culminating in the elimination of all unspiritual elements in an ideal future ensured by the progress of physical scientific knowledge.

In reply to such speculations we refer to the principles that have already been discussed at some length, *viz.*, that the Descents (*Avatāras*) of Vishnu are neither physical phenomena nor have they any reference to the progress of material civilization. But although the spiritual is eternally and categorically different from the material it can be described to those who are totally unacquainted with its nature only by analogy with, and by means of terms that actually refer exclusively to, the mundane. This analogy is however not wholly inapplicable only if it be clearly and constantly remembered as an analogy and not as the spiritual entity itself that is analogically described. The individual soul in the bound state has to pass through forms of deluded existence that correspond analogically to the physical bodies with which he is successively endowed for the purpose. Those forms themselves are, however, material, and signify a progressive development of the functions of the incipient principle of the adventitious life of the false-ego of the bound *jīva*. There is a regular chain of physical and mental progress (?) on the mundane plane for the bound *jīva*. This progress, however, derives what deceptive appearance of reality it seems to possess, from its being really the *perverted reflection* of the Absolute. But in as much as it happens to be a *decluding* reflection of the Reality it reproduces in an unwholesome and distorted form the features of its corresponding spiritual condition, which latter is the subject-matter of the history of the ten *Avatāras*. Godhead exists in all the forms in the realm of the Absolute that are reproduced in the distorted material phenomena of this universe. In the region of the Absolute there really exist eternally all varieties of *jivas*; and Godhead Himself is there eternally manifest in all those Forms. The adventitious physical form of the *jīva* in this world is material and limited; but the corresponding spiritual forms of the transcendental world, are eternal, unlimited, self-conscious and free from all defects. The varieties of the forms of this world owe their relative existence, being related as shadow to substance or as darkness to light, to the real entities of the transcendental plane. The ordinary fish of the

transcendental plane is not merely superior to the Darwins of this world but His nature is realisable by a process that is only obscured by those very notions with which the physical form of the fish has been endowed by the mental speculations of the Darwinian science, however applicable these speculations may appear to us to be in respect of the evolution of the principle of life of this world. Man as fully evolved animal in the Darwinian sense, is too perverted a creature to be reclaimable by the Form of Vishnu as Fish and hence the necessity of progressively fuller manifestation of the Divinity for curing the evils of a progressively retrograding world.

These Descents, or manifestations of the Divinity in this world, take place in all Ages in accordance with the spiritual aptitude of the particular forms of material animation to whom They choose to appear. India has been the chosen land where in all the Ages the Descents (*Avatāras*) of the Divinity have taken place. Indians have been fitted by the Will of Godhead, by their spiritual *varṇāśrama* institution to deserve this special favour.

Sree Krishna is the Own Self of the Absolute Reality, Godhead Himself. If Godhead simultaneously manifests Himself in many places and if those manifested Forms happen to be equal to their source in respect of their Qualities, Activities, etc., these Forms are designated as *prakāsha* (manifest) *murtis* (Forms) of Godhead. There is usually no qualitative difference as between these manifest Forms and the Form That is their Source. As for example, on the occasion of His marriage Sree Krishna at one and the same time married, in qualitatively same but numerically different manifest forms, sixteen thousand consorts; and, on the occasion of the *Rāsa*-pastime, He appeared simultaneously in the company of every one of the *gopas* as His partner in the dance. On the *Rāsa* Site of Braja the manifest Forms of the fullest Source-Form made their appearance and in the city of Dwārakā, on the occasion of His marriage with His Consorts, the Forms that manifested themselves were Those identical with the full Source-Form. No difference was observed to exist between those manifest Forms and the Source-Form. But we also hear of particular Forms of direct manifestation for special purposes and in those manifestations there are also observed differences as regards the Form. As

for instance, in the Son of Devaki we find the four-armed Form. In this instance in spite of this difference in the Form the principle of direct manifestation is admitted. This also holds true in other similar instances. All these are *Prakāsa-Murtis* of Sree Krishna or Godhead Himself.

Next to the above are *Tadekātmarupas*. These are Divine Forms that are essentially identical with that of Godhead Himself. These may accordingly be called Forms that are included in the *nucleus* of the Divine Form but are slightly different as regards Their figures from Godhead's Own Form. These constituent Forms are of two kinds according as They happen to be either (1) Forms for expanded Activity (*bilāsa*), or (2) constituent fractional Forms (*svāngsa*). Of These He Who possesses powers that are nearly equal to those of Godhead Himself, is called Form for extended Activity (*bilāsa*), e.g., Sree *Baladeva* and Sree *Pāikuntha-Nārāyana*. He Whose powers are less than those of the form for extended Activity, is called the constituent fractional Form of the Divinity, e.g., the Forms of Fish, Tortoise, etc.

Next comes the manifestation of Divine Descent in the form of *inspiration*. He is called Divinely inspired into whom any one of the powers of the Divinity is transfused. Such inspiration occurs only in the case of the highest individual souls (*jivas*). Divine inspiration is of two kinds according as the inspiration proceeds from Godhead Himself or from the Power of Godhead. The individual soul (*jīva*) who is inspired by Godhead regards himself as the Divinity. He who is inspired by Divine Power considers himself as the servant of Godhead. Vyāsadeva and Rishabhadeva, etc., are inspired *Avatāras*.

Next come those *Avatāras* who are mainly of three kinds, viz., (1) *Purushāvatāra*, i.e., Descent of Godhead as Master, (2) *Gunāvatāra*, i.e., Descent of Godhead as the Manifestation of any Divine Quality, and (3) *Leelāvatāra*, i.e., Descent for the manifestation of Transcendental Activities. Of these the *Avatāra* of Godhead in exercise of His Supremacy is of three kinds, viz., (1) the Person who watches and guides the inmost purpose of primordial physical Nature, creates the material principle itself and reposes in the liquid of the Causal Ocean without directly interfering in any phenomenal occurrences. Samkarsana and

Mahā-Vishnu are other Names of this *first* of the *Purushāvatāras*. He is a constituent Plenary Subjective Portion of Samkarsana Who is the second of the constituent enveloping Forms of Sree Nārāyana, Lord of Vaikuntha. (2) The *second Purushāvatāra* controls from within the aggregate universe in its subtle stage, is the Creator of Brahmā and reposes in the spiritual liquid in the womb of physical Nature. He is subjective plenary Portion of Pradyumna, the third constituent enveloping Form of the Lord of Vaikuntha. (3) The *third Purusha* guides the material universe in its constituent parts, that is to say, is the Controller from inside of individual *jivas*, as the Supreme Soul and reposes in the Ocean of Milk. He is the Plenary Subjective Portion of Aniruddha, the fourth of the constituent enveloping Forms of Sree Nārāyana.

There are three *Gunāvatāras*, viz., Vishnu, Brahmā and Siva. The third of the *purushas* mentioned above is the same as Vishnu Who is the Maintainer of this world by exercise of the quality of cognitive manifestation (*sattva*). Brahmā, sprung from the navel-lotus of Vishnu, is the creator by means of the active (*rajas*) quality and is only another aspect of Vishnu. In certain *Kalpas* (*i.e.*, regime of Brahmā) *jivas*, as the result of their previous performance of pious deeds that make them fit for such distinction, may hold the high office of Brahmā, the creator. Brahmā of this type, by reason of the fact that the Divine Power is infused into a *jīva*, is also called *inspired Descent* (*Avatāra*). Such a Brahmā should not be regarded as the equal of Vishnu. In those *Kalpas* in which, due to the absence of *jivas* of requisite fitness, Vishnu Himself plays the role of Brahmā, it is only then that Brahmā should be viewed as the equal of Vishnu. This principle holds in the case of all the gods who exercise any authority over Nature, such as Indra, etc. They are sometimes *jīvas*, possessed of special fitness, invested with the Divine power, and sometimes they are Vishnu Himself. From the lowest to the highest region of the universe the aggregate of all material objects forms the gross body of Brahmā. This also is called Brahmā. The second Purusha who guides the inner workings of this aggregate is their Lord or *Iṣvara*. Siva is the destroyer by means of the *tamas* (stupefying) quality. Brahmā, who is sprung from the navel-lotus of Vishnu, effects the destruction of the world by assuming the form of Siva.

In certain *Kalpas* pious *jivas* also hold the office of Siva, the destroyer. In certain *Kalpas* again Vishnu Himself performs the act of destruction in the Form of Siva. These destroyers are all called *Gunāvatāras*. But He Who exists in the realm of Siva (*Sivaloka*) inside Vaikuntha as Sadāsiva, is not *Gunāvatāra*. He is devoid of worldly qualities and, like Nārāyana, is a Manifestation, constituent Form, or Plenary Subjective Portion of Sree Krishna Himself. Sadāsiva stands to Siva in the relation of the whole to the derivative portion, is higher than Brahmā and is equal to Vishnu. He is differentiated from *jiva* by the fact that the latter is engrossed in worldly qualities.

Next in order are the *Leelāvatāras*. These are twenty-five, viz., Chatuhsana, Nārada, Varāha, Matsya, Yajna, Nara-Nārāyana, Kapila, Datta, Hayasirsha, Hamsa, Prisni-garbha, Rishabha, Prithu, Nrisingha, Kurma, Dhanwantari, Mohini, Vāmana, Parasurāma, Raghunātha, Vyāsa, Balabhadra, Krishna, Buddha and Kalki. These appear in every successive *Kalpa*.

The *Manvantārvatāras* are all of them also *Leelāvatāras* but are so called as they rule over their respective *manvantaras*, i.e., intervals between the appearance of one Manu and his next successor. There are fourteen such *Avatāras*, e.g., Yajna, Bibhu, Satyasena, Habi, Vaikuntha, Ajita, Vāmana, Sārbabhauma, Rishabha, Bisvaksena, Dharmasetu, Sudāma, Yogeswara, and Brihadbhānu.

The *Manvantārvatāra* becomes the *Yugāvatāra* in a particular *Yuga* (constituent Age) of his *Manvantara* for the promulgation of particular forms of worship. There are four *Yugāvatāras* corresponding to the four *Yugas*. The *Avatāra* of *Satya Yuga* is white, of *Tretā* red, of *Dvāpara* green, and of *Kali* usually dark colour. In the *Kali Yuga* there is also mentioned, rarely, a yellow *Yugāvatāra*. Of these *Yugāvatāras* some are inspired, some are *prabhava* (master), some *baibhava* (expansion) and some *parabastha*. Among these He Who possesses the full power of the Divinity is *parabastha*. In *baibhava* the power is less than in *parabastha* and in *prabhava* the power is less than in *baibhava*. In *ābesha* or inspired *Avatāra* there is manifestation of only a single potency. Chatuhsana, Nārada and Prithu, etc., are inspired *Avatāras*. Matsya (Fish), Kurma (Tortoise),

Nārāyaṇa, Varāha (Boar), Hayasirsha (Horse-headed), Prisni-garbha, Balabhadra, Yajna, etc., are *baibhava*, and Nrisingha (Man-Lion), Rāmachandra and Sree Krishna are *parabastha*, in the inverse order of superiority. Of These again Sree Krishna is Godhead Himself. There is no one greater than He. Sree Krishna has four Abodes, viz., Braja, Madhupur, Dwārakā and Goloka, each superior to the next in the order of enumeration. Sree Krishna is Fullest, sporting in Braja with His own and with Baladeva. The same Krishna is Fuller in Mathura and Full in Dwārakā with His family and with Pradyumna and Aniruddha. In Goloka although Sree Krishna is conceived as Full, His Goloka Activities being the same as those of Brindāvana, belong to the same category as the Fullest. In these Abodes (*dhāmas*), on account of the difference of the degree of predominance of the mellow quality there is corresponding difference in the extent of the abeyance of the intensity of Divine Power as controlling Force. That is to say in proportion to the prevalence of mellowness there is corresponding obscuration of Power as compelling Force. In the nether worlds, due to lesser degree of mellowness, the aspect of Authority becomes more and more manifest.

Prithī is the first envelope of the universe constituted of the fourteen worlds beginning with *Pātāla* at one end and extending to *Satyaloka* on the other. This *Prithī* as cause is the ingredient and support of the phenomenal universe as effect. The phenomenal universe is successively encased by the six outer envelopes of water, heat, air, sky, the ego and *mahat*. Outside these seven the eighth case is Nature (*prakriti*). This last is full of profound darkness and is the support of the whole universe. Time in the form of the power of activity of the Divinity is, in turn, the support of Nature. Time is upheld by the Will of Godhead. Beyond this is the stream of the Birajā so named from the fact that its water washes off all mundane qualities. This stream is situated between the *chit* (spiritual) and the *achit* (material) worlds. The Ocean of Cause (*kāranārnava*) is the alternative name of Birajā. In the liquid causal current of the Birajā billions of worlds adorn the cavities of hair of Mahā-Vishnu. Birajā is like the moat of Mahā-Vaikuntha and the boundary of the luminous region of *Brahman* which forms the outer limit of Sree Vaikuntha. Sree

Golokadhāma is in the upper region of Sree Vaikuntha. The holy realm of Goloka is located in the centre of all mundane and spiritual manifestations of the Divine Power. In Goloka Sree Krishna abides with all His Family as Lord of Goloka, acting as a god. Dwārakā, Mathura and Braja are the successive inner tracts of Goloka. In the Abodes of Krishna bearing the names of Dwārakā, Mathura and Brindābana there is progressive increase in the proportion of mellowness due to the increasing preponderance of human activity. This *leelā* is of two kinds according as it happens to be, (1) manifest, or (2) non-manifest. The non-manifest *leelā* is the name of that eternal pastime in which Krishna engages simultaneously as Boy, Adolescent and approaching Youth, in the company of His own mother, father, servants, friends, sweethearts, etc., in the infinite manifestation unperceivable by this world. The successive *leelās* as Boy, Adolescent and dawning Youth that He performs in the company of His kin and entourage in this world, in course of one and the same manifestation, are called His manifest *leelā*. The manifest *leela* visible to this world has as its sole object the free bestowal of His mercy on the *jivas*. It is eternal. No sooner does it end in one universe than it rises in another like the rays of the sun lighting up the successive points of the zodiac in its progress; so that the manifest *leelā* is always enacted simultaneously in different worlds but in its due order of successive appearance. All the manifest *leelās* of Sree Krishna in their perennial flow, are eternal and are all-existence, all-consciousness and all-bliss, with the exception of the *mausala leelā* and the *leelā* of the abduction of His consorts, which are illusory and intended to mask the eternal nature of the series of His transcendental pastimes.

The devotees appear next in the order of Descent. The Vaishnavas, as Mārkandeya, Ambarish, Vasu, Vyāsa, Bivishana, Pundarik, Bali, Sambhu, Prahlāda, Bidur, Uddhaba, Daliya, Parāsara, Bhishma, Nārada, etc., are the devotees of Godhead. It is our duty to serve all these devotees in the same way as we serve Sree Hari. Otherwise offence is committed. Among the devotees the order of superiority is as follows: Prahlāda; the Pāndavas who are superior to Prahlāda; the Yādavas of whom Uddhava is

superior to the rest; the Braja-devis superior to Uddhava; Sree Rādhika is the highest among the damsels of Braja.

The four *Yugas*, viz., *Satya*, *Tretā*, *Dvāpara* and *Kali* are called *divya-yugas*. A thousand four-yugas form one *kalpa*. There are fourteen *manvantaras* in each *kalpa*. One day of Brahmā is equivalent to one *kalpa*. The *pralaya* or complete absorption that takes place at the end of every *kalpa* is known as the night of Brahmā. This is the daily *pralaya*. Thirty *kalpas* make one month of Brahmā, twelve months of Brahmā make one year; and fifty years of Brahmā make one *parārdha*. The duration of the life of Brahmā is that of two *parārdhas*. At the end of the period of two *parārdhas* there is dissolution of phenomenal Nature and the attainment of the highest state by Brahmā. Thereupon the phenomenal world is re-absorbed into the primordial principle (*prakriti*). The first of the series of the thirty *Kalpas* bears the name of *Sveta Varāha* or *Brahma Kalpa* and the last of the series as *Pitri* or *Padma Kalpa*. Thousands of the series of *Kalpas* from *Brahma* to *Padma* have passed away thousands of times.

Theism has a long history which may be summed up in one word as the Descent of Godhead into this mundane world. Such Descent accomplishes two Divine Purposes, viz., (1) it is intended to gladden those devotees who may happen to be at the time in this world, and (2) to destroy Godhead's opponents who oppress His devotees and obstruct their devotional activities. These opponents of Godhead are also deputed by Godhead Himself to serve Him by the method of opposition. There is and can be no real independent rival of Godhead, such as a so-called Satan, to be the captain-general of the sinners. The *asuras*, who disturb the devotees and are in consequence destroyed by Vishnu, appear to sinful *jīvas* to undergo chastisement that they deserve by reason of their un-godliness. But those who are privileged to be chastised by Godhead are no sinners. Such chastisement is the appropriate reward of their real service of Godhead, although of an indirect nature. They are servitors of Godhead who appear in the world being deputed by Him for serving Him, in that way. By their opposition they serve to bring out most brilliantly the glory of Godhead. Ordinary *jīvas* are not to follow their example; and, if they do so, they are not so easily delivered by direct Divine inter-

vention. The fallen *jivas* are only delivered when their aversion to Godhead is eliminated. Their aversion to Godhead is due to ignorance of their own proper nature as eternal servants of Godhead. The Descent of Godhead into this world serves also to destroy the root of this ignorance of fallen *jivas*. This is His causeless mercy towards wilful offenders. But all this is still only His secondary purpose. The main purpose of Divine Descent is to make the devotees happy. The secondary purposes are accomplished periodically by the various secondary *Avatāras* who are endowed with the requisite measure of the Divine Power for that purpose. But the main purpose, *viz.*, that of making His devotees happy, is effected only by the Descent of Godhead Himself. Sree Baladeva is the ultimate Source of all the secondary *Avatāras*. He may be regarded as occupying the position of Viceroy for the performance of all official work of the Sovereign. Sree Baladeva destroys the *asuras* and protects the devotees and re-establishes the rule of righteousness.

Krishna Himself comes into this world in the *Sveta Varāha Kalpa* (the cycle of the White Boar) of the *Vaivasvata manvantara* of the twenty-eighth aggregate of four-*Yugas*, appearing as Son of Yasodā in His own eternal human Form in His fullest charm and power. The Son of Yasodā, is Godhead Himself, in His private, domestic, informal role, enjoying Himself unreservedly in the company of His own most beloved ones.

The process of the Advent of Sree Krishna is thus described in the Scriptures. As the different gods prepare to descend into this world through the medium of the series of their respective subjective portions (*anisās*), the heavenly plenary portions of Vasudeva, etc., such as Kasyapa, etc., merging with their original sources (*amsis*), *viz.*, Vasudeva, etc., who belong to the eternal Divine *Leelā*, appear in Mathurā as Sura, etc. The Highest Personality of the Divine *Leelā*, *viz.*, Sree Krishna, Whose manifest Form is Sree Nārāyan, Lord of Mahā-Lakshmi, desiring to appear in Mathurā, causes, first of all, the manifestation of His constituent Form, Samkarsana. Thereupon the Lord, having decided to make visible two other Forms that are Plenary Facsimiles of Himself and Who bear the Names of Pradyumna and Aniruddha, manifests Himself in the heart of Ānakadundubhi. After this,

in response to the prayer of the gods for the purpose of relieving the hard-pressed mundane world, towards the close of the Dvāpara Age of the twenty-eighth aggregate of four-Yugas of the *Vaivasvata manvantara*, Aniruddha, the Same Who lies in Kshiroda, merging with the Form of Sree Krishna in the heart of Vasudeva, becomes manifest in the heart of Devaki moving thither from the heart of Ānakadundubhi. Being nourished in the heart of Devaki by the nectar of loving bliss in the form of motherly affection Sree Krishna, like the waxing Moon, manifests the gradual development of His Form in the heart of Devaki. Thereafter in the great night of the eighth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Bhādra Sree Krishna, disappearing from the heart of Devaki, appears in her couch in the lying-in chamber in the prison of Kamsa. The mother and the other people think that the Baby is born by the ordinary worldly process with the greatest ease. Thereupon Vasudeva entering the apartment of Yasodā in the Great Forest and leaving there his own Son Sree Krishna and taking away the daughter of Yasodā, hurries back to his prison. Some ancient Bhāgavatas also hold that the first of Sree Krishna's own Facsimiles, Who bears the Name of Vāsudeva, appears in the apartment of Vasudeva and that in Gokula Sree Krishna, the Highest Personality of the Divine *Leelā*, makes His Appearance in company of *Yoga-māyā*. But Vasudeva sees only a daughter in the lying-in chamber of Yasodā. On Vasudeva's return to Mathurā with Yasoda's baby-daughter Vāsudeva merges into Sree Krishna. This is corroborated by such statements as the following, 'Krishna born in the Yādava family is different.' 'He Who is full Divinity is higher than He, that is to say, is His original Source.' 'Divinity in His Plenitude, or Godhead Himself, never leaves Brindāvana, nor goes elsewhere.' 'He is always two-armed and is never four-armed.' 'He always sports in Brindāvana in the company of only one of the *Gopcs*.' In the *Padma Purāna* it is stated that the cowherds of Brindāvana, such as Nanda, etc., with all families and birds, beasts, deer, etc., all of them, by the grace of Vāsudeva assuming the heavenly form and mounted in chariots, attained the region of the highest *Vaikuntha*. This is explained as follows. Those constituent parts of the Lord of Braja, etc., viz., Drona, etc., who had come down into this world, were sent

by Sree Krishna to *Vaikuntha*. But Sree Krishna is always sporting in Brindāvana in the company of His most beloved devotees, *viz.*, the denizens of Braja.

The subject of the *Avatāras* of Vishnu is vast and intricate and we have attempted merely to touch its outermost fringe in the above short account. But before we leave the subject it will be useful to deal briefly with a few of the controversial issues that are ordinarily associated with this subject.

A distinction has been made between different *Avatāras* of Vishnu on the basis of partial and complete manifestation, and the partial manifestations have also been graded one under another in different groups, so that we have also part of a part, and so on. These distinctions do not mean that Godhead is a divisible entity. In fact in all these manifestations it is the indivisible and undivided Divinity Who appears. The difference is due either to the degree of manifestation or the greater or lesser presentation or reservation of any particular face or faces of the Divinity. Godhead is One but His powers are many and various and He can exercise all those powers in the way that He likes. This distinction between the Will of Godhead and the Power of Godhead, should be clearly grasped. The Will of Godhead constitutes His distinctive and specific personality. It is not delegated. But the Power Who is subordinate to the Will, is capable of delegation by the Will of Godhead. Godhead alone possesses an absolutely independent Will to Whom everything is subordinate. The wills with which other beings are endowed, are more or less limited in their effectiveness; that is to say, they are controlled, as regards their effective exercise in the shape of exerting power, by the Will of Godhead. The freedom of will of the *jīva* does not mean that the *jīva* can actually act as he likes, but that he is free to like or not like to act. The *jīva* has freedom to choose his course of action but such choice can result in effective action only by the Will of Godhead. The tendency is free but its issue is strictly controlled. There is no such gap between the Will and the Power to act, in Godhead. In Him alone the two are identical but yet not the same. The Power of Godhead is capable of delegation but the Will is not. Therefore it is the Will that constitutes the specific character of Divinity.

The Divine Power is manifold although she is one in essence being the expression of the one and indivisible Divine Will. The gradation, that is noticed in the case of the different *Avatāras*, is in respect of distinction of power. Godhead chooses to manifest His powers partially or fully, directly or indirectly. This is what is meant by the *gradation* of the *Avatāras* of Vishnu. The partial manifestation is regarded as the plenary subjective portion, or *amsa*, of His proximate whole to Whom He is immediately integrated.

The relation between will and power is this that the latter always acts under the direction of the former. Power does not regulate herself. Will is the active principle of Whom power is the actively obedient associate. Power has no initiative of her own. But Will is not effective unless He is associated with power. Such dissociation is never possible in the Absolute in Whom the two are eternally associated and in this sense they may be regarded as being only complementary aspects of one and the same entity. Godhead's Power is, therefore, not external or separable from Godhead Himself although she is always subordinate to His Will.

Godhead is the Possessor of infinite powers. Of these, according to the Scriptures, three only are realisable by the *jīva*, viz., (1) the *chit* (cognitive energy), (2) *jīva* (differentiated souls), and (3) *māyā* (limiting energy). There are also three functions that belong to each one of these three powers, viz., (1) *sandhini* (uniting), (2) *sambit* (enlightening), and (3) *hlādini* (harmonising). These three functions are eternally operative in their pure and unmodifiable fullness in *chit* power. In differentiated souls they are also manifest but in an infinitesimally small measure. In *māyā* the presence of only their dim reflection in a perverted form, is noticeable. To the individual soul the functions of the limiting energy are unwholesome. The functions of the individual soul himself, due to littleness of power, are inadequate although salutary. The *jīva* cannot attain perfect happiness except in conjunction with the *Hlādini* Function of the Power of Enlightenment. This conjunction is possible only through the mercy of Krishna and His devotees.

The coming down of the Absolute into this limited world, effects the deliverance of fallen *jīvas* by bringing about this con-

junction between the bound-*jīva* and the higher world. The difference of degree in the manifestation of the Divine Power represented by the different *Avatāras*, is in accordance with the spiritual condition of the *jīva* at the time of such manifestation. The manifestation by way of Descent attains its perfection in Krishna. The other *Avatāras* dispel the ignorance of the fallen *jīva* and arouse in him, in varying degrees, the desire to worship Godhead with awe and reverence. Krishna, Who is the Source of all the *Avatāras*, reserves to Himself the right of bestowing love for Godhead. This constitutes the supreme excellence of the Activities of Krishna when They appear in this world. In no *Avatāra*, except in a small measure in those of Nrisingha and Rāmachandra, is to be found the extreme deliciousness of the relationship of *jīva* with Godhead characterised by confidence and intimacy, that attains to freedom from all restraint in the case of the Braja-*gopées*, that is to be found in the Krishna *Leclā*. Therefore, the mercy of Godhead reaches its climax in Krishna Who appears before the bound-*jīva* in the most intimate relationship, free from all reservation. The mercy of Krishna, in as much as He happens to be Godhead Himself, is thus superior to that of all other *Avatāras*. This fact is at the root of the broad differences that constitute the dividing line between the various religions. Such difference is due to the degree of intimacy of relationship that it offers between the *jīva* and Godhead.

But the mercy of Godhead, which is so continuously, copiously and causelessly manifested, cannot be realised by the bound *jīva* due to his ignorance of its real nature. Sree Chaitanya came into this world to supply the knowledge of our natural relationship with Godhead which alone can enable us to realise the greatness of Divine mercy. Sree Chaitanya taught us that the highest service of Godhead, viz., that of unreserved loving devotion embodied in the Braja-*devis*, is spontaneously attainable to all of us as soon as we fully realise our true relationship with Godhead. That relationship may be briefly described as that of serving Sree Krishna under the lead of the Hlādini Function of the Divine Power. This is not an abstraction of the human brain. On the highest spiritual plane such service is realised as a part and parcel of the amorous pastimes of the damsels of Braja under the lead of Sree Rādhika

with the youthful Son of the Lord of Braja. This is the highest significance of Krishna *Leelā* and is exemplified in the Career and Teaching of Sree Chaitanya.

With these insufficient preliminary observations of a general character towards the elucidation of a number of current misconceptions on the subject of Religion, I shall venture to proceed to narrate the Transcendental Career of the Supreme Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya in course of the following chapters.

The Narrative seeks to present the Absolute as He is in His Supreme Magnanimity. The Career of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya is *identical* with the Divine Personality in the Form of His Own Loving Service. It is not possible for individual souls, who are detached infinitesimal particles of the Marginal Potency of the Divinity, to realise the Nature of the Loving Service of the Divinity by His Own Integrated Power and his own proper function within the same, except by the Eternal Support of Divine Love Himself. The Magnanimous Activity of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya is *identical* with His Co-ordinate Absolute Activity as the Amorous Lover of Sree Rādhikā in Sree Brindāvana. The individual soul has, therefore, no access to the Realm of the Amorous Pastimes of Sree Sree Rādhā-Govinda except by the realisation of this identity of relationship between the Two distinct *Leelās*.

SREE KRISHNA-CHAITANYA

CHAPTER I COUNTRY AND SOCIETY

THE historical significance of the term *Gauḍa*, the name that is borne by the country of Sree Chaitanya's Nativity, is obscure. It occurs in the works of the famous Grammarian Pānini as the name of a well-known city 'of the East'. The geographical location of the regions bearing the name, referred to in ancient literature, presents a bewildering variety, being applied to tracts and towns scattered in all directions and attaining an extent that is sometimes equivalent to the greater part of Northern India. It supplies the designation to a wide division of the Brāhmaṇas, a well-known style of the Sanskrit rhetoricians and a technical term, connected with the metal 'silver', to the industrialists, of Old India. The name of the spiritual preceptor of Sree Sankarāchārya is *Gauḍapāda*, while Sreeman Madhvāchārya, an inhabitant of the extreme south of the country, bears the interesting name of "Gauḍapurnānanda". No theory regarding the historical origin or application of the word is yet forthcoming that offers any satisfactory clue to the copious use of the word by the ancients in such diverse connections.

There is evidence to prove that there were similar grades in the geographical denotation of the word 'Gauḍa' also at the period of the Advent of Sree Chaitanya. It was then applied to (1) the country under the rule of the Muhammedan King of Bengal, (2) to his Capital situated in the modern district of Mālādā, (3) to

the tract adjoining the old town of Nabadwip to which the Capital of the country had been transferred from Gauḍa in Mālādā by Lakshmana Sena, the last independent Hindu King of Bengal; (4) while the compound '*pancha-Gauḍa*', 'the five Gauḍas', meant practically the whole of Northern India and, specifically, (5) the five countries of Kurukshtera, Kanauj, Utkal, Mithila and Gauḍa (Bengal), (6) the Brāhmaṇa residents of which regions were also designated as '*pancha-Gauḍa*'. The terms '*Gauḍa*' and '*Gauḍamandala*' (Circle of Gauḍa) used by the associates and followers of Sree Chaitanyadeva, as a designation of themselves and their country, mean the greater part of the modern province of Bengal with old Nabadwip, 'the city of the Nine Islands,' as centre; and for the purpose of this Narrative we shall accordingly accept this external regional denotation of the word, without losing sight of its true spiritual import.

But it is well at the very outset to remind our readers of the *historical fact* that neither the *Land* nor the *Activities* of Sree Chaitanya are regarded by the authors of the works that form the original sources of this account, as historical, geographical, or any other entities in the mundane sense. The *Gauḍamandala*, or Circle of Gauḍa is to them the spiritual realm of the Appearance of the Supreme Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya and His eternally associated devotees. The spiritual significance of their attitude may be thus indicated. Godhead is All-powerful. There is a transcendental world in which He dwells with His Own. The only business of all inhabitants of that world is to serve Godhead directly. That world is the spiritual world. It is free from all limitations and defects of this mundane world. When Godhead chooses to come down into this world, He never does so only by Himself. Just as a high and mighty Sovereign of this mundane world, when he chooses to favour a remote part of his dominions with his Royal visit, goes there with his attendants and other paraphernalia of sovereignty, in like manner Godhead also *descends* into this world with His Own, His Servitors, all His Divine Paraphernalia, and His Eternal Spiritual Realm. It is not possible for any earthly sovereign, even if he is so minded, to move out with all the circumstances and pomp of his Royal Magnificence, for sheer want of power and for other obvious reasons. But Godhead is

not troubled by such difficulties. He is here in this world with His realm and complete followings and is present at one and the same time in His fully manifest realm of the spiritual world. That is to say, Divinity and His Realm without being duplicated, is capable of revealing Himself according to the serving aptitude of mundane beholders.

It is this which happens when the Supreme Lord manifests His Auspicious Appearance in this world. The realm of Gauda in which Sree Krishna-Chaitanya appears with His kindred, associates and eternal devotees, is not the mundane region that is visible to the eyes of conditioned souls. The Spiritual Circle of Gauḍa, that appears to bound *jivas* in the figure of a definite tract of land of this physical world, is, in reality, in its own manifest nature, no other than the "*White Island*" (*svetadvēpa*) of the Scriptures, the eternal realm of the Divinity in His Own Most Beneficent Form. This principle of spiritual identity of periodic manifestation also applies to other parts of the sacred land of *Bhārata* (India). This sacredness of the land is not a figment of the human imagination; nor due to any association of any mundane country with the Appearances of the Divinity by way of fortuitous concurrences. The Holy Realm of Godhead, in all its infinite vastness and diversity, appears also in this world being *identical* with *spiritual Bhārata* (India) as its centre. But *spiritual Bhārata* is not always manifest to the view of fettered souls. When the Divinity chooses to come down into this world, the spiritual realm is also unveiled to the unobstructed gaze of mortals. 'But unbelievers do not see what is then really opened to their view, just as the owl does not see the light of the Sun when he shines in all his mid-day splendour.'

It would not also be in strict conformity with historical judgment to regard the view just sketched as an exaggeration of patriotic partiality for the land of one's mundane birth. The Vaishnava point of view is that everything of this world is to be used in the service of Godhead, and it is only by such use of the most beautiful and valued things of this world that man is enabled to earn the position of the highest distinction that is open to him on this condition. This level of view regarding human life and this world, which marks the highest achievement of human civilization, has, of all countries

of the world, been most nearly realised by the spiritual community of Vaishnavas in India. Indeed, Godhead Himself comes into this world only for the sake of the Vaishnavas who follow faithfully His highest teaching by desiring, instead of piety (*dharma*), wealth, sensuous pleasure, relief from worldly misery, etc., which are universally coveted by all mortals, only the unconditional service of the Divinity. In all parts of the world less spiritual people have always been engaged in a perpetual strife for the fulfilment of their mundane aspirations. Godhead has sometimes sent His agents to teach the peoples of other countries the transitory and miserable end of all worldly pursuits and thereby win them to a desire for *liberation* and moral living. But by such mere improvement of the procedure of earthly pursuits effected thereby, the *summum bonum*, in the shape of the unalloyed spiritual service of the Supreme Lord, is never attained. The quasi-spiritual ideals help at best to establish a certain apparently moral order amidst the unrestrained pursuit of sensuous activities.

These *facts* offer the undisputed evidence that is historically available to all of us, which establishes the spiritual superiority of the theistic civilization in India and its premier claim to the Mercy of the Divinity by the sole right of His unalloyed service. The patriotic or any other worldly sentiment, has *no place* in such views.

As India is thus the most sacred country of the world, the land of Gauḍa is the most sacred of all parts of India. This is so because it corresponds to 'Svetadvēepa' wherein the Divinity abides eternally as Embodiment of Perfect Magnanimity. The land of Braja, full of the most exquisite bliss, is the realm of the most delicious *Rāsa*¹ pastimes of Youthful Krishna Who is identical with Sree Chaitanya. The land of Gauḍa is most liberal, as it is only here that Godhead manifests the *Lcēlā*² of bestowing *on all* the unalloyed love for Himself which alone confers on the emancipated *jīva*³ the right of entry into the happy realm of Braja and join there in the eternal pastimes of Sree Sree Rādhā-Govinda. Therefore, for the same reason which makes the *Svetadvēepa* in Sree Brindāvana more magnanimous, the land of Gauḍa is more

¹ Amorous dance of Krishna in the circle of the spiritual milkmaids.

² Transcendental Eternal Divine Pastime.

³ Individual soul, distinct from Godhead.

liberal than the enchanting realm of Braja overflowing with every bliss. There is also a corresponding mellowness in the subdued charms, reminiscent of the chastened mood of faithful lovers temporarily parted, of this land of Gauḍa, which can be utilised by any one who cares to enter its wide portals ever open to receive, with the unspeakable welcome of Divine love in its most unreserved and indiscriminate generosity, all those who want to receive the *summum bonum* as a free gift from the Hands of Godhead Himself.

The reader will now be in a position to understand why the Vaishnava authors expatiate on the minutest features of the holy Circle of Gauḍa with such intense devotional fervour and why we can perfectly rely on any information of a historical or geographical nature, that they may have cared to record, as being free from all sectarian bias in its ordinary narrow worldly sense; as the genuine Vaishnava authors have nothing to do that is worldly either in their life or in their faith for which alone they live. Most of these Āchāryyas lived by themselves a secluded life far from home and family on scanty alms procured by short rounds of day-to-day begging or given unsolicited by well-wishers, and in the humblest styles conceivable even in India. Many of them had discarded inherited worldly affluence for greater convenience of devoting themselves to the practice of the religion which forms the subject of this work and for recording and expounding its principles for the benefit of *all* animate beings. Such is the *spiritual Circle of Gauḍa* and all truly pure souls are the denizens of the Eternal Realm of the Divinity.

The remains of old Nabadwip, the city of the "Nine Islands", are situated at the junction of the *Bhāgirathi* and *Jalangi* rivers about sixty-five miles above Calcutta. The present town of Nadia is one of the 'Nine Islands' of old Nabadwip. The name Nabadwip at the time of Sree Chaitanya was applied to the actual conglomerate of nine separate islands cut up by the channels of the *Bhāgirathi*, which had their different individual designations also. The main part of the old city was situated on the eastern bank of the *Bhāgirathi* which split up Nabadwip into two groups of 'Islands' of which four bearing respectively the names of *Antardwip*,

Simantadwip, *Godrumadwip* and *Madhyadwip* were to the east, and the remaining five, viz., *Koladvip* (modern town of Nadia), *Rudradwip*, *Jahnudwip*, *Modadrumadwip* and *Rudradwip* were located to the west, of the main channel of the *Bhāgirathi*. These details are given clearly in several of the old books and they are supplemented by bits of topographical notices of old Nabadwip that have been recorded by later writers who treated the subject in pursuance of the traditional description.

Antardwip, as its name implies, was the central 'island', or the *heart* of the old town. *Sree Māyāpur*, the quarter of Nabadwip which contained the house of Sree Jagannātha Misra, the father of Sree Chaitanya, was located in the centre of *Antardwip*. Accordingly, the old chroniclers, in describing Nabadwip, always compare it to a full-blown lotus afloat on the stream of the *Bhāgirathi*. The eight islands surrounding *Antardwip*, which is the core of the Lotus, are described as forming its eight extended petals. Holy *Māyāpur*, with the *Yoga-peetha* or the House of God, is described as the central part of the core. The House of God thus forms the central point of an immense circle of which the circumference is stated to be thirty-two miles. This is the Circle of the Nine Islands. The Circle of Gauda is stated by these writers to be 168 miles in circumference.

The Vaishnava authors are tireless in reminding their readers that these places appearing to mortal eyes as the divisions of an ordinary tract of land of this earth, must never be regarded as the real Nabadwip and should not be reverenced as such. Such reverence would constitute an offence against the Abode of the Divinity which is transcendental. They lend no countenance to the practice, so prevalent in all parts of the world, of putting the seal and label of mundane history and geography on spiritual sites and occurrences, a practice that has been the parent of much misery and of the worst superstitions that abound in all the ancient creeds. The Divine cannot be pinned down to any place, time or event of this world. There cannot be a greater offence against Godhead than to suppose that His Body or anything pertaining to Him can at all be of the nature of the things of this world.

So 'Nabadwip' of Vaishnavas is not a geographical town bearing the name situated in the geographical country known to

the historians and geographers of this world under the name of Gauda. Such a place is not only not Nabadwip but if it is ever considered as real Nabadwip, the latter refuses to manifest her proper form to the view of an offender who chooses to think in this unspiritual way. Real or spiritual *Nabadwip*, real or spiritual Sree *Māyāpur* and real *Yogapeetha*, are open only to the view of the Vaishnavas, or uneclipsed serving souls, and whatever they say about the Divine Realm is also, therefore, necessarily true. What other people designate as *Nabadwip* or Sree *Māyāpur* or the Circle of *Gauda* or *Bhāratavarsha*, in as much as it happens to be the mundane view, is entitled to no hearing from a Vaishnava and the very notion that the realm of the Divinity can possibly be any other than spiritual should be most carefully discarded once for all by those who want to understand what the Vaishnavas have really to say.

The reader, who complains that such a procedure will block the way of impartial scientific enquiry, would not also be quite reasonable; because it is he who, under this unscientific pretext, really wants to block the way of the only true enquiry. What the Vaishnava wants the empiric scientist to admit is that he should allow the devotee to deliver the tidings of the Spiritual Realm and not to insist on identifying the geography and history of this world with the Geography and History of the Spiritual Realm. The empiricist is also not entitled to exclude spiritual Geography and History from the account of the spiritual events if his purpose really be to represent a thing, as it actually is, by available evidence and not as he thinks it *ought to be*. The two categories are quite distinct from one another; and it would be fair to the spiritual subject to admit unreservedly its transcendental nature, not merely in theory but in practice as well.

If the career of Sree Chaitanya is written in accordance with the rules laid down by empiric biographers, the narrative would be worse than a parody: it would be a blasphemy. Such a performance is not the purpose of the writer. His object is to faithfully record the events as he finds them in the original sources, offering no opinion of his own except only such as help the elucidation of the subject in its spiritual sense which is foreign to ordinary mundane experience. This method leads to frequent digressions to caution

both the writer as well as the readers at every step not to misunderstand the subject. These digressions, which are offered as the real explanation of the subject, have been gathered from the monumental works of the Āchāryyas, who quote text and verse of the Scriptures to prove by scriptural evidence the absolute truth of every word they write and take no credit for originality, and in conformity with the personal experience of the transcendental teaching and activities of the writer's most revered Gurudeva and his associates.

The geographical site of the *Yogapeetha*, the Abode of God-head, passed out of the memory of most people due to the misfortune reflected by tradition of havoc wrought by the shifting of the course of the *Bhāgirathi*. The religion taught by Sree Chaitanya was not properly grasped by posterity and suffered from misrepresentation in the hands of pseudo-teachers who soon abounded at Nabadwip and in other parts of the country. There have, indeed, been a small number of persons forming the inner following of the Āchāryyas, in all these generations, who have kept up the real tradition. But these have failed to win, for the purely spiritual religion up till now, any appreciable measure of general acceptance.

The pseudo-Vaishnavas themselves also divided into an increasing number of hostile groups, each of which followed a novel inspiration, some of them taking to grossly immoral practices which they were not ashamed to give out as the religion taught by Sree Chaitanya. The history of these tragic occurrences will be told in the concluding chapters of this narrative. The preponderance of the pseudo-forms of the religion has, however, secured their deserved banishment from the society of the cultured classes, and in consequence of this, the real tradition itself has tended to fall into utter neglect and is regarded with mistrust even by the orthodox Hindu society at the instigation of the *Smārta* priests.

The pseudo-cults, that usurped the name of the religion of love, were invaded by all those evils of the older atheistical creeds which Sree Chaitanya wishes to put down. The descendants of the old associates and followers of Sree Chaitanya set themselves up as hereditary teachers of the pseudo-religion which proved to them the means of eking out a miserable livelihood by exploitation

of the credulity of the lowest classes and the most immoral sections of the people. The reader may for the present accept this as a moderate statement of the evils that have made us forget the teaching of Sree Chaitanya, in order to be able to understand why His Religion in course of time ceased to prevail in the upper ranks of society and was allowed to be substituted by wretched counterfeits to suit the whims and wickednesses of designing quacks and knaves who earned their living by pandering to the worst vices of the dregs of society claiming exemption from even the ordinary salutary checks of communities obeying the rules of the old civilization of the country.

It is this which has made the identification of the old geographical sites a matter of hostile interest to the professional Goswāmis even of this day and their misguided followers. When the old town was being deserted the shrines and the holy Forms (*Vigrahas*) were taken by their migrating proprietors to the new sites. And, as the cultured society took little interest in the matter, the old sites quickly passed out of the memory of the nation. But with the revival of interest in the religion of Sree Chaitanya among the cultured classes within the last fifty years or so, there also arose a natural desire to find out the old sites connected with Sree Chaitanya.

Neither has it been really difficult to discover them with the help of the old books. The actual site of the home of Sree Jagannāth Misra which had escaped the general havoc wrought by the *Bhāgirathi*, has been settled on the testimony of Vaishnava authors supplemented by the help of the actual knowledge of the most revered Vaishnava saints. The process by which the old sites have been identified is the same as that by which at the time of Sree Chaitanya the holy sites of Sree Brindāvan were identified and made known. For the proper identification of a spiritual site the testimony of the pure Vaishnavas is, spiritually speaking, the one thing needful, as they alone are privileged to recognise the site. Geographical and historical considerations by themselves are extraneous and can only be ancillary to the spiritual method.

Sree *Māyāpurdhām*, so identified, is situated geographically to the east of the river *Bhāgirathi*, nearly opposite the present town

of Nadia which is located on the western bank of the river identifiable with old *Koladwip* one of the "Nine Islands" forming old Nabadwip.

The name *Antardwip*, changed into Ātopur (vide *Bhakti Ratnākar*), persists to the present day and includes Sree Māyāpur which still maintains its name unchanged. The river has constantly shifted its course, up to quite recent times. The oldest maps enable us to follow the changes only as far back as 1763 A.D. We have to rely exclusively on the testimony of the old writers for avoiding mistaken identification that is being attempted by interested parties by availing the shifting of the location of the places during the two hundred and seventy-six years that elapsed between the Appearance of Sree Chaitanya and the publication of Major Rennel's Atlas. But tradition had always pointed to those deserted parts as the site of the old city. Of this fact we possess reliable and continuous testimony.

The method, that appears to us on the whole to be best for the purpose of describing the place, is to follow the old writers, taking help of such light as is afforded by recent investigations for the purpose of understanding their statements. It is not our purpose to enter at this place into the details of any recent evidence for which the reader is referred to the investigations of Thākur Bhaktivinode which have been summarised in different publications and which have formed the basis of subsequent enquiries regarding the real position of the old sites.

Sree Māyāpur which has escaped the widespread destruction that was apparently caused by sudden changes of the course of the *Bhāgirathi* from a very early period is distinguishable from the adjoining lower alluvial plain by its elevation and older soil of adhesive clay. A modern village occupying a part of the site of Māyāpur is inhabited by a number of Muhammedan families who began to settle on this old site, which appears in course of time to have been totally deserted, from the year 1785. This is traceable.

The actual site of the *Yogāpeetha*, the Home of Sree Jagannāth Misra, was identified by the famous saint Chaitanyadās Bābāji about eighty years ago. It appears that the actual site was known

as such to the few Vaishnavas who cared to be informed about it and had also been visited by them for their devotional purposes. The place was noted by the inhabitants of adjoining villages for alleged peculiarities. They maintain to this day that the place used to be always overgrown with sacred *tulasi*, for which reason people had instinctively desisted from any act of defilement or occupation for the purpose of erecting any private dwelling. This reverence towards the site which is displayed by the Muhammedan residents in occupation of the adjoining plots, indeed, point to a definite conclusion. The row of high mounds, that are now crowned by a number of substantial buildings erected by the piety of Vaishnavas since the re-discovery of the old sites, had never before been occupied by the villagers on their own account who had always regarded with a sort of sacred awe those sites which were collectively known as the '*Vaishnava settlement*' (*Vairāgi dāngā*).

There are many current stories of miraculous occurrences connected with the sites. But the most startling miracle of all is the fact that the persistent local tales are now found to be confirmed in their details by the topographical descriptions of the old writers. For example, we read in the *Bhakti-Ratnākar* that the court-yard of Sribās Pundit, where Sree Chaitanya inaugurated His own distinctive form of worship, viz., the congregational *Kirtan* of Hari and where, in the early days of His Preaching, Sree Chaitanya used to chant daily the *Kirtan* all through the nights in the company of His close associates, was situated one hundred *dhanus* (two hundred yards) to the north of the 'House of God'. A plot of land, adjoining the site of the House of Jagannāth Misra, finally and definitely identified by Sree Jagannāth Dās Bābāji and easily recognisable by the evidence of local tradition, still bears the name of '*khol bhāngār dāngā*', i.e., the mound where the '*khol*', i.e., *mridanga*, was broken, which event, according to *Sree Chaitanya Bhāgavata*, the biography of Sree Chaitanya by a contemporary, took place in a locality *close* to the 'yard of Sribās'. The site is found to have continued to bear this name from the time when the '*khol*' of the offending townsman, who persisted in playing on the *mridanga* for accompanying the chant, was broken by Chānd Kāzi for arresting the further progress of the movement, as described in that work.

The tomb of Chānd Kāzi himself, who afterwards turned into a staunch supporter of Sree Chaitanya, still exists at a place, the situation of which perfectly tallies with the topography of the books. It has, therefore, been possible on the testimony of such excellent corroborative evidence to identify many of the old sites and even the actual location of the houses of the prominent persons connected with the Activities of Sree Chaitanya in old Nabadwip.

Antardwip which formed the heart of the old straggling city was situated at the time of Sree Chaitanya on the eastern bank of the *Bhāgirathi* whose current then flowed under the city. The old bank of the river is identifiable with the help of the old topography. The following old sites have been traced up till now in the above manner—(1) The House of God (*Bhagavatgriham*), i.e., the *Yogapeetha* or House of Sree Jagannāth Misra, father of Sree Chaitanya; (2) the house of Sreebās Pundit in whose 'yard' the *Kirtana* was first regularly sung in company; (3) the house of Sree Advaitāchāryya, the meeting-place of the Vaishnavas in the early days of the movement; (4) the house of Sree Chandrasekhar Āchāryya in which Sree Chaitanya acted the part of Sree Rukmini in a dramatic performance staged by His associates; (5) the tomb of Chānd Kāzi which is shaded by a marvellous *champaka* tree reputed to be over four hundred years old; (6) the old bank of the *Bhāgirathi* marked by its four prominent bathing ghāts, viz., (a) the ghāt of old Siva, (b) Gaurāṅga's own ghāt, (c) Mādhāi's ghāt, and (d) Bārakonā ghāt, all of which possess famous associations; (7) the shrines of old Siva and of *prauṛa Māyā*. All these, with the exception of (5), belong to the village that still bears the name of Māyāpur.

Close to the tomb of Chānd Kāzi is the site of Sridhar's house. The house of Chandrasekhar is situated on 'Ballāl's Tank' which bears the name of the famous independent Hindu king of Bengal, whose successor Lakshmana Sena permanently removed the capital from Gauḍa near Māldā to the old town of Nabadwip. 'The Mound of Ballāl' situate within a short distance of Sree Chaitanya Math is regarded locally as marking the site of the palace of the Sena kings which was shunned by all persons after its desecration by the first Muhammedan conquerors of Bengal. The

residence of Sree Nilāmbar Chakravarti, father of Sree Chaitanya's mother Sree Sachi Devi, was in the quarter of the town where the Kāzi lived, which is the same as present Bāmanpukur (ideptical with Belpukur of the chroniclers).

We shall, therefore, follow the order of the sites that was observed by pious devotees who performed the circumambulation of the holy Nābadwipdhām as described by the old writers, in offering a brief account of the surroundings of Sree Māyāpur that are associated with the early career of Sree Chaitanya.

Antardwip (literally, *the central island*), within which Sree Māyāpur is situated, forms the first of the 'Nine Islands' and the starting point of the circumambulators. The more famous of the recognisable old sites of *Antardwip* (*Ātopur*) have already been noticed above.

Simantadwip is the next 'Island' that is reached by the pilgrim. Its present name is Simuliā situated to the north of Sree Māyāpur. Sardāngā close to Simuliā contains an old shrine of Sree Jagannāthadeva. Sondāngā, Villvapushkarini, the tract known as *meghārchar*, etc., lie close together. The house of Sachi Devi's father, as already stated, was situate near Belpukur.

The third of the 'Islands' is *Godrumadwip* (modern Gādi-gāchhā) to the south and east of Sree Māyāpur. Close to it is Suvarna-bihār with very ancient associations. Other old places of this locality are Harihara-kshetra, which contains the mounds Surya, Brahmā, Indra and other gods, and Devapalli with an old temple of Sree Nrisingha. This 'Island' contains the *bhajan kutir* (cottage of devotional practice) and *samādhi* (resting place) of Thākur Bhaktivinode.

The fourth 'Island' is *Madhyadwip* (Mājidā) situated to the south of Sree Māyāpur. It contains the *Mounds of the Seven Rishis*, a channel bearing the name of Gomati, the adjoining wooded tract being known as Naimishāranya, Sree Brāhmanpuskaras (Bāman-paukherā), Uchchahatta (Hātdāngā) and other sites of pious association.

The fifth of the 'Islands' is *Koladwip* (the modern town of Nadia) to the west-south-west of Sree Māyāpur. At the time of Sree Chaitanya *Koladwip* or Kuliā was separated from Nadia, the

Home of Sree Chaitanya, only by the intervening main channel of the *Bhāgirathi*. It is called 'the place of expiation' in reference to the incidents connected with Gopāl-Chāpal and Devānanda Pandit, whose offences were forgiven by Sree Chaitanya at Kuliā. It is sometimes designated as 'the *high bank* of Kuliā' and is connected by old writers with very ancient events. Close to it is Samudragarh.

The sixth 'Island' is *Rtudwip* south-west of *Koladwip*. In it is situated the village of Champāhāti which was formerly a grove of *champaka* trees. The old shrine of Sree Gaur-Gadādhar erected by Dvija Bānināth, one of the principal associates of Sree Chaitanya, still exists at Champāhāti. It was also the residence of the famous poet Jayadeva of the time of King Lakshmana Sena.

The seventh 'Island' was anciently called *Jahnudwip* (modern Jālinnagar) to the north of *Rtudwip*. Close to it is Vidyānagar where was situated the Academy of the famous Vāsudeva Sārtha-bhauma.

Modadrumadwip is the eighth 'Island' to the north of *Jahnudwip*. Here is the village of Māmgāchhi, the birth-place of Thākūr Brindābandās, author of *Sree Chaitanya-Bhāgarat*, the contemporary, systematic account of the career of Sree Chaitanya written in Bengali verse. At Māmgāchhi was located the paternal residence of Sree Mālini Devi, spouse of Sribās Pandit. Close to the birth-site of Thākūr Brindābandās is the shrine of Sree Madan Gopāla installed by Sree Vāsudeva Datta Thākūr, brother of Sree Mukunda Datta Thākūr of Chattagrām, the close associate of Sree Chaitanya. This shrine contains also the holy Form (*Tigraha*) installed by Sāranga Murāri Thākūr, the associate of Sree Chaitanya.

The ninth 'Island' is *Rudradwip* north-east of *Modadrumadwip*.

These 'Nine Islands' constitute the *Circle of Sridhām Nabadwip* the circumference of which is given as thirty-two miles.

Sree Māyāpur and the adjoining places are at the present day, in their outward appearance, very different from the old town of Nabadwip at the time of Sree Chaitanya. The present town of Nadia, which is not a very beautiful place except its shrines, is now the only part of the 'City of the Nine Islands' that bears anything approaching an urban appearance, judged even by the modest

standard of a Bengal town. The other parts are almost purely rural and are mostly overgrown with jungle. The numerous small channels of the *Bhāgirathi*, which abound about this point, impart a charming openness to the landscape and salubrious freshness to the soft rural breezes that love to haunt the silent places of practices of the only absolute pure faith. The main stream of the sacred *Bhāgirathi*, which is here swelled to noble proportion by the tribute of the great body of sweet and pure water that is poured into it just below Sree Māyāpur by the Jalangi, forms now, as it did also at the time of Sree Chaitanya, the central feature of the countryside. But the main current of the *Bhāgirathi* in old time flowed past the landing places of the old populous city. The riverside of the old city is partly traceable. The bank was washed away probably by a sudden shifting of the course of the river due to a great earthquake that fearfully damaged the place in 1515 A.D. shortly after Sree Chaitanya had renounced home and family.

But the splendours of the old city lingered long in the memory of the inhabitants. Thākur Brindābandās who wrote his Divine Narrative, *Sree Chaitanya Bhāgavat*, not long after the disappearance of the Supreme Lord, gives the following description of the old town to his contemporaries who could also confirm his eulogies. 'There was not another town in the world,' says Thākur Brindābandās, 'like Nabadwip where Sree Chaitanya was born. The divine architect must have known beforehand His impending Advent and had accordingly lavished with a prodigal hand all his bounty to make of Nabadwip the ideal place that it was. Who could describe the opulence of Nabadwip? Every single bathing-ghat was thronged by a hundred thousand bathers. Each caste resident in Nabadwip had lakhs of members of every age. All the people were highly skilled in their respective occupations by the grace of the goddess of learning. All of them boasted of being masters in their line and mere boys contended with the Brāhmaṇa teachers in scholastic disputations. People from various countries flocked to Nabadwip. One could obtain the real taste of learning only by studying at Nabadwip. The great fame of its learning drew countless students who were taught by an incredibly large number of the most erudite teachers. This atmosphere of learning was

also one of great happiness by the kind glance of the goddess of wealth.'

But the spiritual condition of the town, in which we are specially interested, was not encouraging. This is what the same competent observer has to say on the subject. 'The people were blessed with the choicest favours of the goddesses of learning and wealth. In these respects they had attained the summit of their desire. There was only one drawback. The time of all people was wholly wasted in the enjoyments of secular pursuits. The world was destitute of devotion for Krishna and Rāma (Baladeva). At this earliest stage of the Iron Age there came to prevail prematurely those worst practices that have been predicted by the Scriptures about the far-off future of this Age of Evil. The people sat up whole nights at the songs of *Mangalchandi* (goddess of worldly blessing). This was the only practice of religion known to the people. There were a few who in their vanity worshipped the goddess *Bishahari* (healer of poison). Some lavished immense wealth on the making of grand idols. Wealth was squandered on the marriages of sons and daughters. The time of the people was passed in such vanities. The great Chakravartis and Bhattāchāryas were wholly unaware of the significance of the great *Shāstras*. By their teaching of the Scriptures they earned for themselves and their hearers only entanglement in the toils spread by the pitiless hand of Death. They never expounded the Divine Dispensation of the Age in the shape of the *kirtana* of Krishna. They spoke only of faults, and never of the good qualities, of any one. There was a great number of arrogant recluses and ascetics whose mouths never uttered such a sound as the Names of Hari. Those persons, who were most reputed for their piety, used to utter the Names of Govinda and Pundarikāksha only at their baths. Even those who professed to teach the *Gectā* and the *Bhāgavatam*, never employed their tongues to the task of explaining the principles of devotion to Godhead. No one could be persuaded even by entreaty to take the Name of Krishna. Every one harped *ad nauscum* on the merits of learning and social rank.'

There was one notable exception to the above rule. 'Sree Advaita Āchāryya who lived at Nadia was most highly respected for his unrivalled learning, his high birth and honoured position

in society. He was an eminent professor of the Scriptures and excelled in expounding the true spiritual practice and principle. He was equal to the great Sankara (Siva) himself in expounding the subject of devotion to Krishna. He was equally well versed in all branches of the Scriptures; and, in teaching them, he was always careful to explain that devotion to the Feet of Krishna was the essence of all the Scriptures. He was always engaged in worshipping Krishna with the greatest ardour, in the simplest and purest manner, by the offering of sprays of the holy *tulasi*, dearly loved of Krishna, steeped in the sacred water of the Ganges. He often gave vent to deep ejaculations of sorrow, resembling the rumbling of thunder and impregnated with the fiery energy of Krishna, which, passing beyond the limits of this universe, reverberated in the Holy Realm of Vaikuntha.

Sree Advaita Āchāryya was the leader of a small band of sincere devotees who were at this time settled in Nabadwip. These Vaishnavas were opposed by atheists, specially on account of their practice of frequently uttering the Name of Hari with a loud voice. This practice together with their theistic views was sufficient to mark them out as the legitimate objects of their invectives and ridicule, from which they could not be effectively shielded even by the great influence of Sree Advaita Āchāryya himself who was regarded with respect and awe all over Nadia.

The reasons for such hostility were many: the foremost being that the Vaishnavas eschewed all worldly pleasures and enjoyments, which was regarded as a depreciation of the life of epicurean ease that was fashionable in all ranks of the then society. There was no want of aggressive epicureans in that Age also who openly condemned all pretensions to a life that was in every way above animality. They wrote scurrilous ballads against the Vaishnavas and sang them in the streets. ‘The ascetic, the chaste woman, no less than others,’ so ran these effusions, ‘will go the way of all the flesh. He alone can be said to have done good deeds in his previous birth who rides the *dolā* and the horse and is preceded and followed by scores of running footmen. Much as your Holiness cries in the mood of devotion, yet it does not cancel your Holiness’s sorrows of poverty. Your Holiness never ceases to call upon the Name of Hari with a very loud voice. It may

surely anger the Lord to be addressed by shouts.' The frank realism of these fifteenth century Bengali followers of *Chārvāka* cannot be outdone by their most up-to-date successors of the present day. This was almost the general attitude of the citizens of a profligate town devoid of all taste for anything higher than bodily enjoyments of a refined character engendered by their engrossing secular studies and urban pursuits.

There was another class of objectors who also ridiculed the mode of *kirtana* with a loud voice. The ground for their objection was, however, different from that of the refined epicureans. 'I myself,' such were the ideas of these people, 'am the *Brahman* Who is devoid of all the qualities. Why then do they make any such distinction as that between servant and Master?' These men were the worst enemies of the Vaishnavas. There were also many persons who looked upon the Vaishnavas as designing worldly people who took to begging to earn their livelihood by that easy method, for sheer idleness.

We frequently hear the complaint that religion suffers degradation by scarcity of people who really lead the religious life. It is supposed that if religion is freed from the clutches of these people who have so long monopolised it for their profit and pleasure and have degraded it by their foul lives, people in general would voluntarily follow the lead of truly devout persons. If only the preachers of religion, say these open atheists, lead truly spiritual lives themselves, their example would prove irresistible in winning everybody to spiritual living. But the opposite of this is what almost invariably happens in this world. The sincere devotees are always ridiculed and persecuted by the people. This is also exactly as was likely in the circumstances. Those who are steeped in worldliness have a spontaneous dislike for persons who openly profess principles and follow a mode of life that are in essential contradiction to theirs. The conduct of the devotees is always regarded by worldly people, who have no inclination for listening to the unpalatable truth, as both foolish and mischievous. Therefore, instead of following the example of such persons the worldlings always look upon the pure souls as enemies of every useful institution and set themselves in vindictive opposition to their activities. To what ferocious persecution the *bona fide*

Vaishnavas have been subjected at the hands of their opponents from time to time, is not sufficiently well known, although it forms the most pathetic and the most shameful chapter of the history of India. Sree Chaitanya says, "It is our only duty always to chant the *kirtana* of Hari with humility greater than that of the blade of grass, with greater endurance than that of the tree, giving all due honour to others without desiring any honour for ourselves." But nothing can make amends, in the eyes of worldly people, for the crime of chanting the Name of Hari or proclaiming the unvarnished Truth in and out of season and at all time with body, mind and speech as required by the teaching of all the Scriptures embodied in the institution of the whole-time *kirtana* of the Absolute.

We have already described in a preceding chapter the state of religious opinion in the country of the time of Sree Chaitanya. There was no lack of unspiritual doctrines and practices upheld by ancient philosophical systems most of which were mere apologies, or even justifications, of the ordinary ungodly practices of the misguided *jivas* of this world. The system that was in most vogue among the Pandits of Nabadwip at this period and has been fashionable ever since, is the atheistical system of *Nabya Nyāya*. The other atheistical systems of philosophy were also assiduously taught in the schools of Nabadwip. We learn that scholars even from *Mithila* (Tirhoot) came to Nabadwip to study the New Logic. *Sannyāsins* and learned Professors from Benares and all parts of North India came to Nabadwip for the study of *Vedānta*. We also read of students coming to Nabadwip even from distant *Kānchi* and the southernmost part of the country.

These materialistic studies had acquired such preponderance at that period that scholarship and ungodliness came to be regarded as necessarily identical. The masses sang the songs of *Mangalchandi* and considered the endeavour for increasing the means of worldly enjoyment as the *ideal* of religion. The common people, and especially the wealthy trading communities, performed with great *eclat* the worship of *Mangalchandi* and, by subsidising the Brāhmaṇa Pandits with liberal pecuniary gifts, were enabled to buy their subservient approval of those unscriptural practices. Much money was recklessly squandered on the shortlived idols and no

less on the exhibition of pantomime dolls, which was an invariable and costly item of expense on all festive occasions. There were very few permanent Holy *Vigrahas* in Bengal at that time. The worship of the permanent Holy *Vigraha* became a tradition in Bengal only subsequent to the Advent of Sree Chaitanya and as the effect of His Teachings. Temporary images were the only objects of worship. Those images were immersed in water after the festivity in their honour was concluded, on the wrong assumption that the Form of Godhead is a material and temporary entity.

This posture of affairs filled the devotees with grief and despair. No one served Godhead, no one ever talked about Him, or took His Holy Name, or could be persuaded to listen to any discourse about Him. This was the blighted waste glutted with every form of luxury aggravated by the strenuous pursuit of worldly knowledge, which evoked the tenderest solicitude, of that small band of pure souls and impelled them to adopt every method that could be devised for rousing the deluded people to a sense of their eternal duty and thereby saving them from their impending terrible doom. But all their efforts for the amelioration of the spiritual condition of the people were misunderstood and responded to by the bitterest invectives, ridicule and cruel persecution! Yet those servants of Godhead did not lose their faith nor relax their efforts, although their very food did not taste in their mouths at the sight of the miseries of their kindred. The Bhāgavatas applied themselves to their devotions in the forms of the worship of Krishna, discourse about Krishna, and bathing in the holy stream of the Ganges. And all of them incessantly blessed the world, 'May Krishna soon bestow His mercy on all!'

CHAPTER II

FAMILY AND ELDERS

THE Advent of Sree Chaitanya was preceded by the appearance of a numerous body of pure devotees in different parts of the country who joined Him at Nabadwip in due course and became incorporated in His Activities. This galaxy of the stars of the first magnitude occupies the foreground of the picture that it is our purpose to offer. Sree Chaitanya is unintelligible without intimate knowledge of the doings of His associates. He is expressed in the only intelligible form in the lives of His *bona fide* devotees. These devotees were not so many *imitators* of Sree Chaitanya. Each of them has a great, living, individual personality; each *serves* Sree Chaitanya in his own way and helps to demonstrate the quality of unbounded catholicity and endless variety of manifestation in individual personalities of our only eternal function. The conduct of these devotees is even more instructive than the Transcendental Activities of Sree Chaitanya Himself Whom it was the function of these great souls to express by serving the Absolute Truth identical with the Personality of Sree Chaitanya under every form of circumstance and every manner of disposition, by the method of incorporated, subordinate service.

The Vaishnava authors always offer the esoteric view of those events. When Godhead Himself comes down into this world, He does not come un-attended by His eternal associates and Divine paraphernalia. They accompany Him to this world. The transcendental realm of the 'White Island' is the Eternal Divine Abode of Sree Chaitanya Who is identical with Sree Krishna and presents the Divinity's Own Benevolent Nature dominating over all other Divine Qualities.

The Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya dwells in the White Island, as does Krishnachandra in *Braja*, with all His elders, kindred, associates and complete entourage. When Sree Chaitanya deigns

to come down into this world, He comes in His Fullness, with all His elders, associates, servitors and realm. His advent is, therefore, preceded by the appearance of His elders. All these are a part and parcel of Himself and are in fact the extension of His own Divine Self. It is by their reciprocal means that the Lord manifests His own Full Personality. What the Lord is in His super-manifest Nature cannot and need not be known to any one except Himself. Others need know the Lord only to the fullest extent and in the fullest manner in which He chooses to manifest Himself to them individually. By the manifestation of Godhead to the individual soul, the latter is fully satisfied and, as a matter of fact, such an individual does not desire, nor does he think it necessary to know anything more, not merely for the time being but for all time.

The *jīva* to whom Godhead reveals Himself sees the same Divine manifestation everywhere and always, in His infinity of aspects. His cherished Divinity is to him verily an endless Ocean of perfect and exquisite bliss, free from every species of unwholesomeness, imperatively requiring his perennial loving service by His perpetual manifestations. The appearance of the Lord is for the purpose of making His devotees happy by affording them the Sight of Himself. The establishment of religion and the destruction of demons who appear as the enemies of Godhead do not require the Personal Appearance of Supreme Godhead Sree Krishna Himself. These functions can be, and as a matter of fact are ordinarily, performed by the Vishnu Avatāras, or sometimes even by the favoured among the pure *jīvas*, by His command. The establishment of the *samkirtana* of Krishna, which is the Divine Dispensation of this *Kali* Age, is effected by the *Avatāra* for the Age, and it would not be necessary for Godhead to come down into this world for this purpose alone.

But there is a function which cannot be delegated, *viz.*, that of pleasing the devotees. *Love* for Himself can neither be conferred nor be satisfied by anything short of Himself. It was for the purpose of bestowing, on fallen *jīvas*, love for Himself in the perfect form that is found only in Goloka, that Sree Krishna, wearing the devotional mood and grace of Sree Rādhikā, appeared in this world in His Eternal Identical Form of Sree Krishna-

Chaitanya, with all His associates, elders and servitors eternally manifest in the 'White Island', the realm of Krishna's boundless and causeless Mercy.

In *Braja* Sree Rādhikā sets the model for the highest service of Krishna. In the 'White Island' it is Sree Krishna Himself Who performs the function of teaching all individual souls how Sree Rādhikā serves Sree Krishna in *Braja*, by putting on Sree Rādhikā's grace and devotion in order to enable Himself to serve Sree Krishna after the manner of Sree Rādhikā in Her highest Mood, *viz.*, during Her separation from Sree Krishna. The service that is rendered by Sree Rādhikā manifests itself in this world in *Braja* at the close of the *Dvāpara* Age. But in its direct manifestation it is not at all understood by mortals. It is only the Lord Himself Who can bestow this perfect loving devotion to Himself even on souls that are averse to Him on principle and thereby enable them to realise the true meaning of such pure devotion.

This explanation of the *real* purpose of the advent of Sree Chaitanya is fully corroborated by the Scriptures and by the Activities of Sree Chaitanya Himself. When Godhead Himself appears in this world, all His Secondary Manifestations automatically merge in Him. It was in this wise that there were born among men, by the command of Godhead, in advance of His own Appearance, the kindreds, associates and servitors of the Lord.

Sree Ananta, Siva, Brahmā, the Rishis and all the relations and associates of every Divine *Avatāra* were born as Vaishnavas. Krishna alone knows all who were born and their prototypes. Some of them appeared in Nabadwip, some in *Chattagrām*, *Srihatta*, some were born in *Rāhr*, in *Odra*, and the West. The devotees descending into this world from their transcendental realm appeared in various places, and, coming up subsequently to Nabadwip, were there joined together around the Person of the Lord. All the Vaishnavas were born in Nabadwip, except a few who appeared elsewhere.

The Elders who were first to appear were Sree Sachi, Sree Jagannāth, Sree Mādhabendra Puri, Sree Keshava Bhārati, Sree Isvara Puri, Sree Advaita Āchāryya, Sree Sribās Pandit, Sree Chandrasekhar Āchāryya, Sree Pundarik Vidyānidhi, Sree Thākur Haridās, Sree Upendra Misra, father of Sree Jagannāth Misra,

with his seven sons, Sree Nilāmbar Chakravarti, father of Sree Sachi Devi, Sree Sree Prabhu Nityānanda, Sree Gangādās Pandit, Sree Murāri Gupta, Sree Mukunda and others.

Our records show that a certain Brāhmaṇa of Western India, bearing the name of Sree Madhukar Misra, a devotee of Sree Sree Nārāyaṇa, for some unknown reason, came to Sylhet and settled there. Sree Upendra Misra was the second son of Sree Madhukar Misra. Sree Upendra Misra was a Vaishnava, a great scholar, wealthy and possessed of an abundance of good qualities. Sree Upendra Misra was the father of seven sons,—(1) Kamsāri, (2) Paramānanda, (3) Jagannāth, (4) Sarbeswar, (5) Padmanābh, (6) Janārdan, and (7) Trilokanāth. Sree Jagannāth Misra, one of the seven sons of Sree Upendra Misra, migrated from Sylhet to Nabadwip, the emporium of all learning of the Age. The title of Sree Jagannāth Misra, earned by his *shāstrik* scholarship, was *Purandara*.

At Nabadwip Sree Purandara Misra espoused Sree Sachi Devi, the eldest daughter of Sree Nilāmbar Chakravarti. With the intention of dwelling in the neighbourhood of the sacred stream of the *Bhāgirathi*, that has issued from the Feet of Vishnu, in the company of high-born Sree Sachi Devi, who was the embodiment of devotion to Vishnu, pure-hearted magnanimous Purandara Misra settled in Sree Māyāpur in the central 'Island' of the City of Nine Islands.

Sree Chandrasekhar Āchāryya was the maternal uncle (mother's sister's husband) of Sree Chaitanya. Sree Murāri Gupta, the author of *Sree Chaitanya Charit*, belonging to a Vaidya family of Sylhet, had migrated to Nabadwip. He was senior in years to Sree Chaitanya. Sree Pundarik Vidyānidhi, also known as 'Premanidhi' and 'Āchāryyanidhi,' had his paternal home in the village of Mekhalā about fourteen miles to the north of the town of Chittagong, where his sacred 'seat' still exists. His partner's name was Ratnāvati. His father was Vāneswar (or Suklāmbar) Bhatta and his mother's name was Gangā Devi. He was the disciple of Sree Mādhabendra Puri and was himself accepted as his *Guru* by Sree Gadādhar Pandit Goswāmi. Sree Chaitanya called Pundarik Vidyānidhi 'father' and bestowed on him the name of 'Premanidhi' indicative of servitorship of Godhead. Sribās and his younger

brother Sree Rāma left their home at Sree Māyāpur and removed to Kumārhatta after Sree Chaitanya's renunciation of the world.

Sree Nityānanda Prabhu, the Associated Facsimile of Sree Chaitanya, made His appearance in the village of Ekchākā in the country of *Rāhr*, not far from Mollārpur station of the E.I. Railway, within the modern district of Birbhum. Hāḍai Pandit or Hāḍai Ojha, the father of Nityānanda, was a good Brāhmaṇa from Mithilā, resembling Vasudeva in the immaculate purity of his nature. The name of the wife of Hāḍai Pandit was Padmāvati. Nityānanda made His appearance in this world on the *tithi* which is ever hallowed by His birth, that corresponds to the thirteenth day of the bright fortnight of the month of *Māgh*. As a child, Nityānanda startled all the neighbours by being constantly occupied in the company of His associates in rehearsing the events of the *Avatāras* of Vishnu. The details of these childish pastimes have been reverentially preserved. Their nature may be briefly indicated.

He made His playmates form themselves into *the assembly of gods*. One of the boys, representing the Earth, having complained to it of her unbearable sufferings under the crushing weight of iniquities, those children who acted as members of the assembly of gods repaired to the bank of the adjoining river and there prayed to the Lord Who rests in the Ocean of Milk. One of the boys, hid behind the tree, gives this reply of Godhead to their prayer, 'I will soon be born in the Home of Vasudeva at Mathura'. Sometimes personating the Divine *Avatāra* of the Dwarf, Nityānanda affected to deliver Bali. On another occasion He would fall into a swoon acting the part of Lakshmana in the *Leela* of Godhead's *Avatāra* as Sree Rāmachandra hit by the powerful dart of Indrajit. Then one of the boys, acting the part of Hanumān, hastened to procure the required curative herb from the Gandhamādana Mount and by that means effected His recovery. Such pastimes of the little Boy amazed all beholders who could not account for this extraordinary conduct of the little Child. Twelve years were passed in these pleasant activities under the roof of His parents.

Nityānanda set out on His long travels to all places of pilgrimage at the age of twelve. The incident that immediately led to

this long pilgrimage is thus stated. A certain *sannyāsin* became a chance-guest at the house of Hādāi Pandit. He begged of Hādāi Pandit to give Nityānanda to him; and, in order not to transgress against the rule laid down by the *Shāstras*, Hādāi Pandit found himself obliged, against his own wish, to hand to the *sannyāsin* the Darling of his heart Who was much more to him than even his own life. The grief of the parents, in being thus parted for good from their Child of twelve, knew no bounds. The nature of the renunciation of the world for the sake of Godhead must on no account be confounded with renunciation for any other purpose, which latter is an unpardonable and clear dereliction of one's duty. The renunciation exhibited by Godhead and His devotees redounds to the good of the whole world, and, most of all, of those very persons who appear, to the superficial observer, to be the greatest sufferers by their abandonment.

Lord Nityānanda, after thus leaving His parental home, travelled to all the *tirthas* in company of the *sannyāsin*, till the twentieth year of His age. The places He thus visited include Bakreswar, Vaidyanāth, Gayā, Kāsi, Prayāg, Mathurā, Brindāvana, Hastināpur, Dwārakā, Siddhapura, Matsyatirtha, Siva-Kānchi, Vishnu-Kānchi, Kuru-kshetra, Bindu Sarobar, Pravāsa, Sudarsan-tirtha, Tritakup, Vishāla, Brahmatirtha, Chakratirtha, Prati-Srotā, Naimishāranya, Ayodhyā, Sringaharpur, Kausiki, Pulastāsrama, Gomati, Gandaki, Mahendra-giri, Haridwār, Godāvari, Benvā-tirtha, Sree Parbata, Sree Ranganātha, Hari-kshetra, Rishabha-Parbata, Kritamālā, Mādurā, Tāmraparni, Malayaparbata, Badari-kāsrama, Gokarna, Surpāraka, Kanyakānagara, Nirbindhā and all the countless holy sites. He journeyed to all those places in order to sanctify them by His visit.

At the conclusion of this long pilgrimage Nityānanda enacted the *Leela* of obtaining the only reward of pilgrimage in the shape of attainment of the privilege of the companionship of the true devotee, in as much as He now joined Sree Mādhavendra Puri, '*the first shoot of the Purpose-Tree of Loving Devotion*', from whom He accepted His initiation into spiritual life (or, according to some, He accepted His initiation from Sree Lakshmi-pati, the Guru of Sree Mādhavendra Puri). The meeting with His Guru is thus

described by Sree Ghanasyam Thākur, the writer of *Bhakti-Ratnākar*: 'Lakshmiपati, so famous in the school of Madhva, the owner of all good qualities, most dear to the Lord of Sree Lakshmi Devi, partook of his meal obtained by begging, interspersed with Krishna-talk, at the house of that Brāhmaṇa. Nityānanda in the Form of Balarāma showed Himself to Lakshmiपati under the guise of a dream: 'A certain Brāhmaṇa boy has come to this village in the garb of a *super-ascetic*; He will be your disciple; make Him your disciple by means of this *mantram*, and He spoke the *mantram* into his ear.' Nityānanda on meeting him repeatedly said to the *sannyāsin*: 'Do thou deliver Me by initiation by the *mantram*.' After initiation Nityānanda was given the Brahmachāri's name of '*Svarup*' and has accordingly been sometimes called 'Nityānanda-Svarup' both by Sree Brindābandās Thākur as well as by Srila Kavirāj Goswāmī. Sree Nityānanda subsequently made His way to Nabadwip where He joined Sree Chaitanya.

Thākur Haridās made his appearance in this world in about the year 1451 A.D. (1372 Sh.), thirty-five years before the Advent of Sree Chaitanya, in the village of *Budhan* in the district of Jessore. He came of a Muhammedan family and in some manner, of which we do not possess any trustworthy record, obtained very early in life the mercy of a Vaishnava who initiated him into the religion of all souls. He, thereupon, left his parent's house and his kin, and came to Benāpole where he made a small hut and lived therein. His method of worship consisted in repeating, constantly and with a loud voice, the holy *mahā-mantram* of the sixteen Names of Godhead. He recited the *mahā-mantram* three *lakhs* of times every day. For this purpose he cut himself off completely from every form of worldly association. It was not long, however, before his practice found a malicious opponent in a local landholder of a most villainous character, of the name of Rāmchandra Khān. Rāmchandra Khān was as foolish as he was wicked and was incited to adopt the infamous method, described below, by the representations of a fanatical section of the Hindu residents of the locality who felt themselves scandalised by a Muhammedan presuming to adopt their language in taking the name of Godhead in the manner that

could pierce even the ear-holes of such a great personage as Rāmchandra Khān!!

Rāmchandra Khān did not believe that a person in the full bloom of early youth could have really no attachment for woman. He accordingly deputed a shameless harlot of great beauty, whom he subsidised for the purpose, to employ her seductive arts to compass the ruin of the young devotee.

This abandoned woman continued to offer herself regularly at the solitary hut of devotion of Thākur Haridās for three successive nights. She was kept waiting for the whole night by Thākur Haridās by the assurance that he would attend to her request after the utterance of the quota of the Names that he was under obligation to take daily, was completed. Towards the close of the third night that harlot, whose mind had been completely changed by listening to the Holy Name of Godhead from the lips of the great saint who was so completely unmindful of those irresistible charms of a young woman that are the cause of ruin of so many so-called Rishis of all ages and conditions, fell prostrate at the feet of Thākur Haridās and, with a contrite and chastened heart, implored him to enable her to worship Godhead in the pure manner that he himself did. The woman opened her heart frankly to Thākur Haridās and told him all about the infernal conspiracy and also of her own past life which had been utterly sinful.

Haridās said to her that she was fit to take the Holy Name of Godhead, and he accordingly initiated her into the life of the pure service of Krishna. Haridās then advised her to give away all her treasure to the pious Brāhmaṇas and devote herself to the worship of Krishna by constantly uttering His Name, living apart from all other people in the solitary hut which he had built for his own worship. Thereupon, bestowing his own hut on that woman, Thākur Haridās left Benāpole for good. That harlot became thenceforward a most renowned devotee of Krishna.

From Benāpole Thākur Haridās proceeded to Chandpur eastward of Saptagrāma, the residence of the father of the future Raghunāthdās Goswāmi who was at this time a little boy. The name of Raghunāth's father was Gobardhan Mazumdār. Hiranya was the elder brother of Gobardhan. They were employed under Sultan Hussain Shah to collect the revenues of Saptagrāma, which

totalled twenty *lakhs* of rupees of which twelve had to be remitted to the Royal Treasury, the collectors being entitled to retain for themselves the balance of eight *lakhs*. They were consequently among the richest persons of that time. Thākur Haridās put up with Balarām Āchāryya of Chāndpur who was the priest of Hiranya and Gobardhan. The boy Raghunāth Dās frequently visited Thākur Haridās. This was the cause of his obtaining the mercy of Sree Caitanya later on.

At the request of Balarām Āchāryya, Thākur Haridās once presented himself at the gathering of Brāhmaṇas in the halls of Hiranya and Gobardhan who were patrons of Brāhmaṇas and pious persons. The Thākur was well received by both brothers. Presently, evidently in view of the practice of the Thākur, the assembly began to praise the taking of the Holy Name, some maintaining that the Name destroys sin, others contending that the Name confers deliverance from the bondage of the world. Thākur Haridās said that those secondary results are effected by the *dim reflection* of the Name. The effect of the Name Himself is to arouse love to the Feet of Krishna. *Emancipation* is the *trivial effect* of the *dim reflection* of the Name.

A Brāhmaṇa by the name of Gopāl Chakravarti, who was employed by Hiranya Mazumdār in connection with the remittance of revenues to Gauḍa and who happened to be present, felt greatly chagrined to hear these statements of Thākur Haridās and asked the assembly not to be led away by the ridiculous effusions of an impostor, acting the part of a *sādhu* to deceive ignorant people, by endorsing the view that *emancipation*, which is not attainable in *crores* of births on the path of knowledge of the *Brahman*, is gained by the mere *dim glow* of the Name. This, he said, was impossible and intolerable.

When Thākur Haridās, with great calmness, quoted the Scriptures to show that emancipation, resulting from the dim glow of the Name, is trivial and is not accepted by devotees even when it becomes available to them, the Brāhmaṇa's anger was so much inflamed by this exhibition of firmness that he shouted to Thākur Haridās that if he failed to prove from the Scriptures that emancipation results from the dim glow of the Name, was he prepared to have his nose cut off? The Thākur intimated his readiness to

submit to the bet proposed, whereupon all the assembled people and especially Balarām Āchāryya strongly condemned the outrageous conduct of Gopāl, and all of them, including Hiranya and Gobardhan, begged the forgiveness of the Thākur for the insult that had been openly offered to him in their presence. Thākur Haridās observed that Gopāl's anger was due to his ignorance of the Scriptures and he was, therefore, not to blame; and saying this, he left the place, resuming the loud chant of the Name of Krishna. It is recorded that for this offence Gopāl Chakravarti was afflicted with the worst form of leprosy in the course of three days and his nose fell off in consequence, and that although the Thākur so readily forgave him, his offence was not pardoned by Godhead.

From Chāndpur Thākur Haridās made his way to Sāntipur and presented himself at the house of Sree Advaita Āchāryya. The latter was very much encouraged by the appearance of Haridās and provided him with a suitable place for his devotional practices by finding out a cave in a retired part of the bank of the Ganges.

Thākur Haridās lived in this cell and had his daily meal at the house of Advaita with whom he would talk about Krishna. Haridās expressed his fear that the conduct of Advaita in feeding him daily with the most unreserved hospitality might bring social troubles to him, he being a Muhammedan by birth. Sree Advaita Āchāryya, in answer to this, formally offered to Thākur Haridās the meal cooked for the occasion of the anniversary of the *srāddha* ceremony of his departed father, that had to be given to the Brāhmaṇas according to custom, with the remark that 'by feeding you, *crores* of Brāhmaṇas are truly fed'.

It is said that the Thākur was tempted a second time by a woman while he was staying at the cave at Sāntipur, and that this time the woman was no less than Māyā herself, the deluding power of Godhead, whose solicitations, which no *jīva*, from Brāhma downwards, can resist, produced on Haridās the only effect of increasing still further his ardent devotion to the Feet of Krishna. Māyādevi sought and obtained the gift of the Name of Krishna from Thākur Haridās in lieu of her efforts to test the sincerity of the devotion of Haridās.

From Sāntipur Thākur Haridās made his way to the village of *Fuliā* which was the residence of a strong community of Brāhmaṇas. *Fuliā* is situated three miles to the east of Sāntipur. Thākur Haridās lived here in a cell on the bank of the *Bhāgirathi* as at Sāntipur and chanted aloud the *mahā-mantram* of the sixteen Names of Godhead three *lakhs* of times every day. The Muhammedans who lived in the neighbourhood were incited by the Brāhmaṇas of *Fuliā* to complain to the Kāzi about the behaviour of Haridās, which, they pointed out, was bound to produce a most undesirable effect on the *prestige* of the Muhammedan community and religion.

The Kāzi took this seriously and had Haridās brought to the presence of the Governor for trial. He was at first treated with great respect and allowed to visit the prison as he desired to converse with the prisoners. The prisoners, who did not expect in their midst a saint who was treated with respect by the keepers, thought he might obtain their release from captivity. They accordingly pressed round him and begged him to intercede with the Governor for their liberation. The Thākur in reply *congratulated* them on their captivity and wished that their state of bondage might be prolonged. This filled the prisoners with dismay.

Haridās hastened to remove their mistake by explaining what he meant. He said that they were forcibly kept away from the pursuit of worldly objects in their state of captivity. This gave them a respite for the worship of Godhead. Because Godhead cannot be worshipped when one's mind is engrossed in the affairs of this world. They should avail themselves of this opportunity, so mercifully placed in their way, of turning their thoughts to Godhead; so that, having acquired the taste for such life, even after they were set free, they might continue to serve Godhead in the midst of the various temptations of the world. He did not really desire the prolongation of their state of captivity in the ordinary sense.

When Thākur Haridās was produced before the Governor for his trial, he was offered a good seat in the court and the Governor pleaded, with every appearance of sincere good will, that he should revert to his own society, its customs and religion. Thākur

Haridās replied: 'A man follows the path that appears to him to be the best. This is the dispensation of Providence. Under this law a man born in a high Brāhmaṇa family sometimes embraces the Muhammedan religion. And although he was born in a Muhammedan family, God has been merciful to him and has shown him the path of the highest good. This path he intends to follow. If such conduct appears to the Governor to be deserving of punishment, he is prepared to undergo any consequences that it may involve.'

The Governor then began to revile Vishnu and threatened to punish Thākur Haridās with severe whipping till he would be forced to give up the heinous course. Thākur Haridās simply replied: 'Even if he is actually cut to pieces he would never for a moment cease to utter the Name of Hari with his mouth.'

The Governor, at the instance of the Kāzī, now carried out his threat by ordering Thākur Haridās to be whipped in twenty-two market-places of Āmuā *Mulk*. This barbarous order was duly executed. When Thākur Haridās appeared to be dead, the ruffians who had been employed to cudgel him, tried to throw his body into the Ganges. It is said that they failed to lift the body with all their efforts. This frightened the Governor and his aiders and abettors in this horrible sin.

The Governor now spoke kind words to Haridās. He was convinced that Haridās was a real *Pir* (holy man) and not a cheat as he had taken him to be. He was sorry for what he had done and even begged his forgiveness. He then ordered his men to liberate Haridās and assured him of immunity from all further molestation on his part, desiring him to do as he liked. Thākur Haridās returned to his cell at *Fuliā*, undaunted by this terrible proof of the implacable vindictiveness of his opponents.

On another day a snake-charmer was giving a display of his art at the house of a wealthy resident of *Fuliā* to the accompaniment of dance and music. Thākur Haridās happened to arrive on the spot and taking his stand on one side watched the performance which was a representation of a Feat of Sree Krishna, viz., the quelling of the serpent Kāliya.

Overpowered by the associations awakened in him by the sacred theme, Thākur Haridās fainted away, and, when he was helped to regain his consciousness, himself joined in the dance, exhibiting all the external signs of the eight *sātrika* perturbations. The snake-charmer stopped his performance, and, with palms joined in the attitude of reverence standing motionless on one side, gazed with awe on the devotional activities of Thākur. This mood of Haridās was, however, soon over; and, after he had stopped, the snake-charmer resumed his musical performance. Those present were so moved by the occurrence that they devoutly took the dust of the feet of Thākur.

A Brāhmaṇa, who happened to be in the crowd and had watched the whole affair, thought of acquiring a cheap reputation for sanctity by imitating the *sātrika* perturbations of Haridās that he had witnessed. He accordingly affected to swoon away and forthwith began to sing, dance, laugh and shiver, in imitation of Thākur Haridās.

The snake-charmer now behaved in a most strange manner. He, who had been so quiet and respectful towards Thākur Haridās, suddenly fell upon the unlucky Brāhmaṇa with great fury and began to belabour him, with a cudgel that he snatched from one of his men, in a most merciless fashion. That Brāhmaṇa, unable to bear the severe thrashing, took to his heels in a very short time. On being asked by the spectators the reason of his strange and violent conduct towards the Brāhmaṇa, the snake-charmer replied that he had beat the Brāhmaṇa, because by his hypocritical exhibitions he was trying to bring into contempt the conduct of the revered Thākur Haridās.

Another Brāhmaṇa of Fulīā opposed the practice of chanting loudly the Name of Hari by Haridās on the ground that it was against the Scriptures. He denied that Haridās, who was born of a Muhammedan family, had any right to dabble in the philosophy and religion of the Hindus; that this very fact of a Muhammedan posing as a teacher of the Scriptures of the Hindus, portended the appearance, long before its appointed time, of the worst period of the Age of evil. 'This impostor has the effrontery of procuring the best food by begging from door to door, presuming

to teach the *Shāstras* to respectable people! If his explanation regarding chanting of the Name of Hari *with a loud voice*, is not found in the Scriptures, his nose ought to be cut off.' Accosted by the infuriated Brāhmaṇa in the above fashion Thākura Haridās with a smile left the place to chant loudly the Name of Hari. That Brāhmaṇa also met with the condign punishment of his offence by being smitten with the small-pox in the course of a few days, that cost him his nose.

Thākura Haridās now made his way to Nabadwip and there joined the congregation of the small group of Vaishnavas that was gradually forming round the figures of Sree Advaita Āchāryya, who had settled there as a teacher with his own Academy (*tol*) and Sribās Pandit who lived close to the Academy of Sree Advaita Āchāryya. At this time Thākura Haridās constantly travelled to different parts of the country with the object of preaching the *kirtana* of Hari to the people. Shortly after his arrival at Nabadwip, he joined Sree Chaitanya as one of His most devoted associates.

Sree Advaita Āchāryya, who was the acknowledged leader of the small Vaishnava community of Nabadwip at the time of the Appearance of Sree Chaitanya, was a person of vast erudition, possessed of great wealth and occupied a position of the highest respect in the society of Nabadwip. He appears to have been originally a native of the village of Nabagrām in some as yet unidentified part of Bengal. He subsequently settled at Sāntipur, whither he had come in course of a pilgrimage that he had undertaken after the departure of his parents from this world. At Sāntipur he married Sree Sītā Devi. Sree Advaita Āchāryya met Thākura Haridās for the first time at Sāntipur where he offered him the meal on the occasion of the annual funeral ceremony of his departed father, instead of giving the same to the Brāhmaṇas by seminal birth as is the custom of the *smārtas*.

Advaita built a small house at Nabadwip where he set up his Academy (*tol*) in which he taught different branches of the *Shāstras*. Advaita Āchāryya soon acquired the reputation of being one of the most eminent Professors of Nabadwip who upheld in all his teachings the pre-eminence of the principle of unalloyed devotion to Krishna, which he conclusively established by the

evidence of the whole body of the Scriptures. This marked him out from among the host of the other Brāhmaṇas who also taught the Scriptures at Nabadwip.

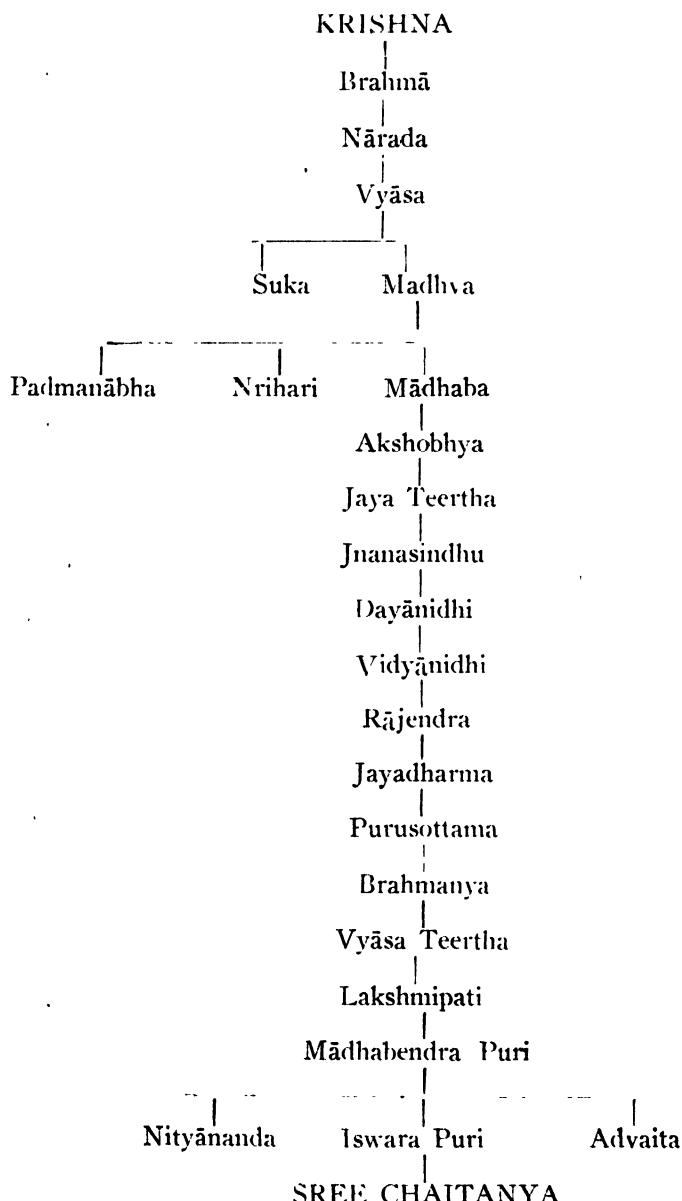
Sree Advaita Āchāryya, in conformity with his teaching, was a devout worshipper of Krishna. He did not perform his worship with the elaborate ceremonials that characterized its development in the *Dvāpara* Age. He worshipped Krishna with the offerings of the spray of *tulasi*, most beloved of Krishna, and the sacred water of the Ganges which issued from His Feet. This simplicity of worship was a concomitant of the philosophy of pure, transcendental devotion which he expounded in his Academy. He wanted to keep the pure devotion to Krishna distinct from the lifeless rituals of the *elevationists* and *liberationists*. Advaita worshipped Krishna with the pure devotion of unclouded cognition and with the specific purpose of moving Krishna to come down into the world to re-establish the Eternal Religion. The Advent of Sree Chaitanya is attributed by all His devotees to the sincere and ardent invocations of Sree Advaita Āchāryya. That Advaita Āchāryya's prayers and worship brought about the appearance of the Supreme Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya in this world, has been repeatedly declared by Sree Chaitanya Himself.

The Academy of Sree Advaita Āchāryya was the regular meeting-place of all the Vaishnavas of whom the foremost was Sribās Pandit who lived close to Advaita, not far from the House of Sree Jagannātha Misra.

Sree Advaita Āchāryya belonged to the community of Sree Madhvāchāryya which is one of the four authorized Vaishnava communities. He was the disciple of the famous Mādhabendra Puri, the spiritual preceptor of Sree Nityānanda, Sree Iswara Puri and several other elders of Sree Chaitanya.

Mādhabendra Puri is regarded by the most illustrious followers of Sree Chaitanya as '*the first tender shoot of the mighty Tree of Transcendental Love represented by Sree Chaitanya Himself in its full growth*'. There is to be found no trace of the amorous love for Krishna in the School of Madhva prior to Mādhabendra Puri. The disciplic succession of the followers of Sree Chaitanya, through

Mādhabendra Puri, is to be found in *Sree Gauraganoddesa*, *Sree Prameyaratnāvali*, the works of Sree Gopālguru Goswāmi, and also in the *Bhaktiratnākar*. The line of succession is as follows :—



We reserve the detailed discussion of the esoteric implication of the spiritual disciplic succession for a future chapter in connection with the doctrine of Sree Chaitanya.

The following particulars regarding Sree Mādhabendra Puri are found in *Sree Chaitanyacharitāmrita*. He went, unattended by any other person, to Sree Brindāvana. On his arrival there, as he was seated under a tree on the bank of the pool (*kunda*) of Govinda, Sree Krishna appeared to Mādhabendra as a cow-boy under the guise of offering him milk for appeasing his hunger. Led by a dream Mādhabendra then installed the Divine Form of Gopāla on the Gobardhana Mount. His sojourn to Puri to fetch camphor and sandal for Gopāla and the episode of *Kshira-chorā Gopināth* will be described later. At Mathurā Mādhabendra Puri accepted the alms of cooked food from a *sanioriā* Brāhmaṇa, whose touched water is not accepted by high class *Smārtas*, in violation of the *smārta* practice which errs by applying *caste rules* to the devotee of Godhead and its notions of ceremonial cleanliness to food accepted by Krishna (*mahā-prasād*).

Mādhabendra Puri rebuked Rāmchandra Puri for his disrespect to himself, his spiritual preceptor, and blessed Iswara Puri for his whole-hearted devotion to preceptor by expressing the hope that he might attain to love for Krishna. Sree Mādhabendra Puri's utterance at his disappearance is cherished by all pure devotees. It runs thus: 'Thou Lord, Who art ever melted to kindness towards the humble, when wilt Thou, O Lord of Mathurā, be seen by me? My heart, Dearest, sad for not beholding Thee, grows delirious. Oh! What shall I do now?'

Sree Iswara Puri came of a Brāhmaṇa family belonging to the village of Kumārahatta (near Hālishahar Station of the E. B. Railway) and was the most beloved disciple of Sree Mādhabendra Puri. Sree Mādhabendra Puri, being satisfied with his devotion, blessed him saying, 'May you attain loving devotion for Krishna.' Sree Chaitanya did him the favour of receiving initiation in the ten-lettered mantra from him at Gayā. Govinda and Kāshiswara Brahmachāri, disciples of Sree Iswara Puri, joined Sree Chaitanya at Puri on the disappearance of Sree Iswara Puri.

The attitude, which the reader is expected to take up towards the associates of Sree Chaitanya, is put tersely in the opening verse of *Sree Chaitanyacharitāmrita*. "Sree Krishna-Chaitanya is Godhead Himself as is indicated by His Name Who means the

Self-conscious Principle, Krishna. Godhead sports in six Divine Forms, *viz.*, as (1) Krishna, (2) the Two Preceptors, (3) the Devotees, (4) the *Avatāras*, (5) the Manifestations, and (6) the Powers. In other words, the Spiritual Preceptors *are* Chaitanya-deva; the devotees such as Sribās, etc., *are also* Chaitanya-deva; the *Avatāras* *are* Chaitanya-deva; and the Powers *are also* Chaitanya-deva Who is himself Krishna's Own Cognitive Self, the Subjective Divine Personality Whose Essence is Pure Cognition. We shall discuss these truths in greater detail in the succeeding chapters.

I have tried briefly to put before the reader some of those considerations the substantive truth of which has to be realised by the disciple in order to be fit for studying profitably the holy narrative of the career of Sree Chaitanya.

I cannot do better than conclude this chapter with the cautious words of Thākur Brindābandās, 'Know for certain that the Activities of Chaitanyachandra, by listening to which the heart is purified, manifest themselves only by the grace of the devotees of Godhead. Who can know the Deeds of Chaitanya that are the hidden secret of the Vedas? I write only what I have heard from the lips of the devotees. . I make my obeisance at the feet of all the Vaishnavas. May there be no offence committed by me by such attempt.'

CHAPTER III

BIRTH AND INFANCY

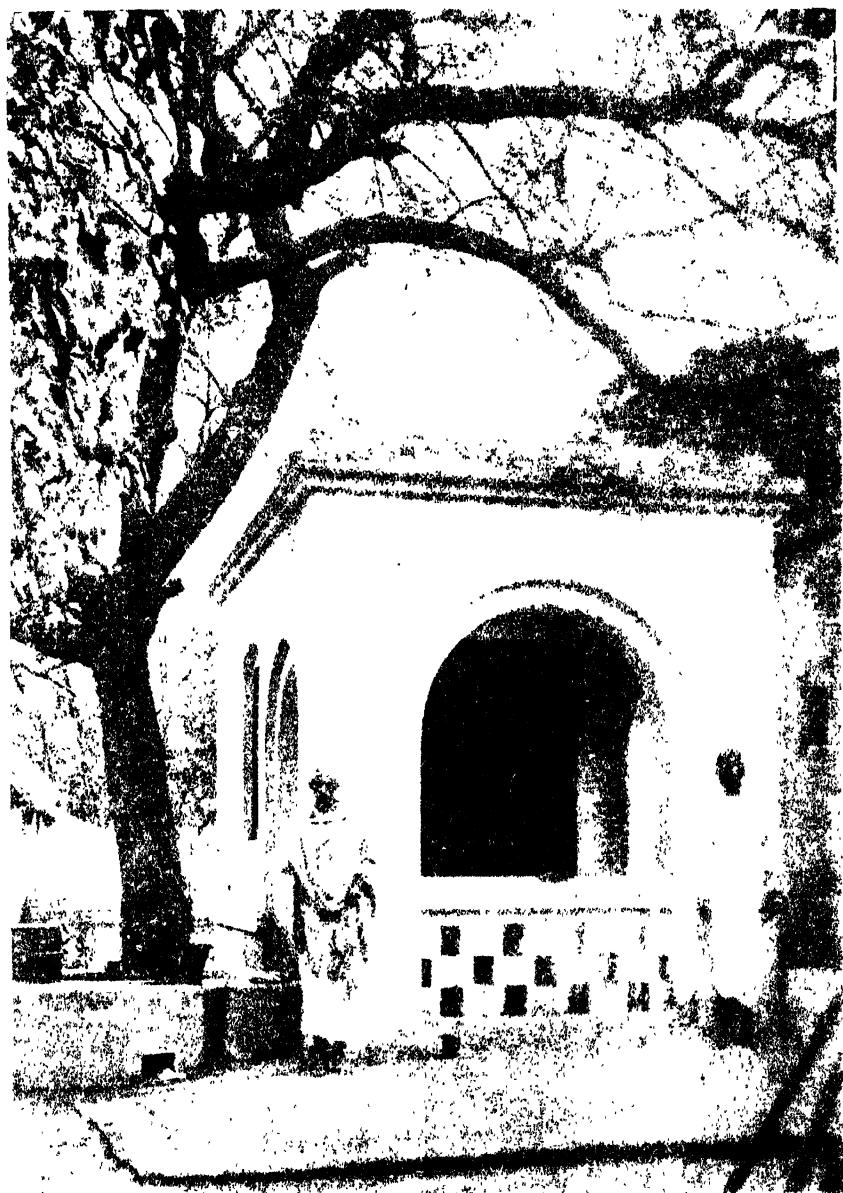
WHY Krishna comes into this world is known only to Himself. The invocation of the Lord by Sree Advaita Āchāryya is stated by devotees as the cause of the Advent of Sree Chaitanya. The spiritual Academy of Advaita was the gathering-place of all the Vaishnavas of Nabadwip. There they met daily and spent a greater part of their time in holy discourses about Krishna. They were regarded as a peculiar group whose ways and words appeared alike singular and distasteful to the people in the midst of whom they found themselves placed by Providence. This small group of devotees felt keenly for the miseries that their worldly-minded brethren brought upon themselves by their attachment to interests other than Krishna. They tried to instruct them about Krishna. But this only served to increase all the more their aversion to Krishna and His devotees.

It was this apparently hopeless state of affairs that led Advaita to the conclusion that the universal and stubborn godlessness that prevailed everywhere could only be relieved by Krishna-chandra Himself. Advaita believed in the efficacy of prayer that is offered by one who knows nothing except Godhead. He believed that the intolerable anguish, of those sincere devotees who daily gathered under his roof, caused by the extreme misery of the worldly people due to their bitter aversion to Krishna, must appeal to the Lord and have power to draw Him in no long time from His Eternal Seat of Goloka into this world, for the consolation of His own beloved ones. Advaita, who was well versed in the Scriptures, noticed all these favourable indications. He was so convinced of the impending Appearance of Krishna that in his prayers he began to call upon Him most ardently night and day to save the world by His speedy Appearance.

That Advaita felt sure about the Appearance of Sree Krishna and worshipped Him for this specific purpose with *tulasi* and the holy water of the Ganges, which are most acceptable to Krishna, with the single-hearted desire for His Appearance, was known to all the Vaishnavas. He, in fact, actually assured them most clearly and emphatically about the expected Advent of Krishna into their midst within a short time. I have stated already that Sree Chaitanya Himself repeatedly declared that His Advent was solely due to the whole-hearted prayers of Advaita.

The Advent of Sree Chaitanya in the particular *Kali* Age that follows the Appearance of Sree Krishna at the close of *Dvāpara*, is also hinted by the Scriptures. In the *Mahābhārata* it is declared that Krishna appears in the *Kali* Age as a *Brāhmaṇa* with a yellow complexion to promulgate the *yajna* in the form of congregational chanting of the *kirtana* of Hari. The *Bhāgavatam* contains the same statement and adds that Krishna appears in the above manner in the *Kali* Age with all His kin, associates, consorts and servitors. Krishna Himself appears towards the end of the *Dvāpara* Age of the *Vairavatā Mancantara* of the twenty-eighth aggregate of four-Yugas of the *Kalpa* of the White Boar. He appears as a *Brāhmaṇa* with the yellow complexion in the particular *Kali* Age following His Appearance in the *Dvāpara*. In the *Dvāpara* Krishna appears as Godhead served by His consorts, kindred and servitors. In the *Kali* Age Sree Krishna-Chaitanya appears as the Best of devotees in company of the congregation of devotees, viz., His own beloved ones in order to teach by His own example how Krishna, i.e., He Himself, is to be served. This is the main cause of the Advent of Sree Chaitanya. The prayer of Advaita and the suffering of the devotees are the secondary cause. Unless this real cause of His Appearance is properly grasped, the most characteristic Activities of Sree Chaitanya can never be rightly understood.

The Appearance of Sree Chaitanya came about in the following way. In Nabadwip there dwelt a most generous and pure hearted *Brāhmaṇa* devoted to the zealous performance of all religious duties, resembling in his immaculate piety Vasudeva, the father of Sree Krishna. The name of this ideal *Brāhmaṇa* was Sree



The Birth-site of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna and Gopis

Jagannāth Misra. We have stated his ancestry in another place. His revered consort's name was Sree Sachi Devi. Sree Sachi Devi was the most loyal of matrons, the very embodiment of the pure devotion to Vishnu and mother of the whole world. Eight daughters were born to Sachi Devi one after another, all of them leaving this world in their infancy. The ninth issue was a son whom his parents obtained in response to their prayer to Vishnu for a male offspring. The name of this boy was Bisvarupa, the elder brother of Sree Chaitanya.

Sree Krishna entered the persons of Sachi and Jagannāth Misra towards the end of the month of *Māgh* in the *Saka* year fourteen hundred and six (January, 1485 A.D.). The mouths of Sree Ananta uttered paeans of triumph that were heard by Sachi and Jagannāth, as in a dream. Jagannāth Misra thereupon said to Sachi, 'I had a dream that a realm of light entered my heart and from my heart it passed into yours. It seems some great personage is about to be born.' There were other indications. Misra felt a difference everywhere. His body and the house appeared shining like a place dwelt by Lakshmi, the Goddess of every well-being. All people showed him honour at all places. Money, clothing, rice, etc., poured unsolicited into his house. Sachi noticed heavenly figures in the sky that appeared in the attitude of prayer to herself; but no one else observed them. Sree Jagannāth Misra and Sree Sachi Devi felt transported with inexpressible delight and applying themselves with a mind restrained from all other pursuits and with special ardour to the worship of Sree *Shālagrāma*, awaited the impending Advent of the Lord. Thirteen months were passed in this state of expectant suspense.

Sree Krishna-Chaitanya made His auspicious Appearance in this world on the 23rd day of *Fālgun* of the *Saka* Year 1407, which corresponds to the 18th of February of 1486 A. D. He was born in the evening just with the rising of the full-moon, which was then in eclipse, in the midst of the loud chant of the Name of Hari by the people of Nadiā, as is the custom on the occasion of an eclipse. Nature joined with man and the gods to pay homage to the Moon of Nadiā risen on the *Eastern Hills*. The spotted lunar disc hid its face in shame, under the guise of eclipse,

on the Appearance of the Perfect Moon absolutely free from all spots. On that blessed Moment of Nativity of the exquisitely beautiful Baby were shed in unstinted profusion all the most auspicious influences of all the favouring constellations, that blended together to greet the Advent of the Lord. Strange forms were observed to crowd into the yard of Sachi, lying prostrate on the bare earth in the act of adoration, waving the whisk, holding aloft the umbrella, singing, dancing and beating the drum or playing on the flute, in an ecstasy of unbounded joy.

That very Moment Advaita suddenly leaped with delight in his home and danced with joy arm-in-arm with Thākūr Haridās to the blissful surprise of on-lookers. All the devotees had the same experience. The tide of joy that swept and eddied over all Nadiā and threw the very birds and beasts and all dumb Nature into a delirium of ecstatic joy, the pens of Thākūr Brindābandās and Kavirāj Goswāmi are alone privileged to describe. The brush of no earthly or celestial painter can do justice to the delicate assemblage of colour, warmth, holy perfume, the volume of delirious joy, free from the least suggestion of grossness, that manifested themselves at the Birth of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya and have ever clung to the Holy Eve of His Advent, most highly cherished by all pure devotees who declare the worship of the day of the Lord's Advent to have power to kindle love for Krishna.

The Birth of the Baby drew a long train of visitors, male and female, who hastened to have a view of the Divine Child and make suitable offerings. Gods and goddesses, assuming the forms of men and women, mixing with the crowd, made their way to the home of Jagannāth Misra, in order to obtain a sight of the Baby and greet the Feet of Sree Gaurasundar, dancers, singers, musicians, promulgators of auspicious tidings, flocked thither to swell the joy of the Festive Occasion.

Sree Chandrasekhar Āchāryya and Sribās Pandit duly performed the purificatory Birth Rites of the Son of Jagannāth Misra. Sree Purandar Misra made suitable gifts to all those who brought presents for his Boy on this auspicious occasion. Sree Sitā Thākūrāni, the consort of Advaita Āchāryya, made her way to Sree Māyāpur from her residence at Sāntipur to see the Prince of Boys. Sree

Mālinī Devi, pure-hearted consort of Sribās Pandit, accompanied Sītā Thākurāni with various presents and afforded her eyes the opportunity, that they longed for like the bird *chakora*, of feasting on the nectar flowing from the moonlike Face of the Transcendental Baby. Misra distributed whatever he had, with an open hand, to the Brāhmaṇas, having first offered the same to Godhead. He kept back nothing of the rich variety of presents for himself. Sree Nilāmbar Chakravarti, father of Sachi Devi, taking Misra aside, informed him in a whisper that the signs on the Person of the Child prognosticated a very great Transcendental Personage Who would deliver the world.

The Birth of Sree Chaitanya, of which we have culled the above account from the narratives of His associates, was never regarded by them as anything like the ordinary occurrence of this world with which all of us are so familiar. The *raison d'etre* of their attitude is thus put by Thākur Brindābandās in a passage of the Nativity Hymn sung by the gods on the occasion: 'He, Who is All-Will Who can destroy the whole world at His Will, could certainly also therefore destroy Kamsa, Rāvana and other enemies of Godhead instantaneously and by His mere fiat. But although He could do so, He killed Rāvana by being Himself born in the Home of Dasaratha and slew Kamsa by being Himself born as the Son of Vasudeva; because He is ever full of All-joyous Activities.'

'The realm of Nabadwip where Krishna makes His Appearance is no mundane region.' The transcendental realm of Sree Krishna is identical with the power of Godhead known as *Neelā* or *Leelā* and is an object of worship of His devotees. The *Yogā-pcetha*, i.e., the Abode of Sachi-Jagannāth, situate in the centre of Sree Māyāpur, is the Plane of the Appearance of the Lord and is identical with Brindāvana or the mind of the devotee constituted of the pure cognitive essence. Sree Nabadwip is replete with the ninefold devotion, being of the nature of the heart of those pure devotees who have found the Refuge of the Lotus-Feet of Sree Gurudeva. Such is the language of realisation that is used by the devotees in regard to Nabadwip, which is necessarily unintelligible by the method of delusive mundane analogies. But

we need not, therefore, reject the testimony of those whom we have accepted as our authorities, not on the ground that it is untrustworthy or dishonest but for the irrelevant reason that it is not perfectly intelligible to those who are destitute of pure devotion to the Holy Feet of Godhead. This would be against all principles of impartial history and, as regards the theistic account, will result in the retention of the chaff by elimination of the grain under the untenable plea of our own ignorance.

We have merely referred to certain spiritual values to prevent misconception of the Great Event that we are describing. Those values will be fully discussed later on when we arrive at the proper point of the narrative. But there are other considerations that it is necessary to place before the reader in order to enable him to follow the development of the narrative itself.

Godhead and His devotees appear in this world by the operation of the transcendental *positive* Power of the Divinity that directly attends on His Person. Individual souls (*jivas*) are born by the operation of the deluding stupefying power of Godhead that can never abide in the Presence of the Divinity. The material cases enveloping individual souls (*jivas*) are the creation of the deluding power and such envelopment is the misfortune that overtakes them in consequence of the deliberate practice of aversion to Godhead. The worldly birth, through the medium of material bodies, belongs to the category of material phenomena, being brought about by the operation of the Deluding Energy as the result of the soul's desire for worldly enjoyment.

The Appearance of Godhead and His devotees in this world is not the consequence of the practice of any previous aversion to Godhead either by wish or activity, nor due to the operation of the Deluding Power. Godhead and His devotees appear in this world by their own will through the medium of the Transcendental Power. The Nature of Godhead and His devotees is such that it simultaneously enlightens and deludes conditioned souls to whom They appear. They reveal their transcendence to those conditioned souls who sincerely want to serve the Lord and at one and the same time appear to those who are averse to His service, as deluding phenomena of this world. The Birth of Godhead, the Realm of

Godhead, the devotees of Godhead, thus remain, in their proper transcendental nature, ever inaccessible to the deluded understanding of all irreverent persons. This may not be tasty to arrogant godless intellectualism, but is nevertheless the only position that is perfectly reasonable and logical to the understanding that is not prepared to hypocritically disown its consciousness of its present limitations and the consequent imperative necessity of welcoming the entry of the Truth, however opposed the Truth may seem at first sight to *all* its most deeply cherished prejudices.

Those, therefore, who are prepared to maintain that the Birth of Sree Chaitanya is an ordinary affair of this world, start deliberately on the wrong track and should not blame anybody but themselves if they find the narrative not perfectly amenable to those rules of probability which are derived from their worldly experience. Sree Chaitanya's Birth appeared, for this very reason at the time of its occurrence, as an ordinary event of this world to His contemporaries with the exception of the comparatively small group of His devotees. It is not the untrue experience of the atheists which the reader of these pages is offered as '*the history of theism*'. Neither is he asked to deny the *existence* of the experience of the atheists. But he is asked not to accept their experience as *theistic or true* nor to confound Godhead with the fallen souls of this world.

The Birth of Sree Chaitanya was brought about by the operation of the Transcendental Power of Godhead Who is categorically different from His material Energy. Sree Jagannāth Misra and Sree Sachi Devi who is not metaphorically but really the mother of the whole world, are the eternal Parents of Godhead. Their minds and bodies are constituted of the principle of pure cognition which is categorically different from the constituent principle of the body and mind of ordinary mortals. 'Vasudeva' is the Scriptural term to denote this pure cognitive essence. Vāsudeva, Son of Vasudeva, manifests Himself only in Vasudeva, or the pure consciousness, for playing His Pastimes. The relationship between Sree Jagannāth Misra and Sree Sachi Devi or the seeming pregnancy of the latter, does not belong to the category of the sensual affairs of men and women who are given to the plea-

sures of the flesh. The real significance of the Conception of the Lord by Sree Sachi Devi and of its transcendental purity will appear to the mind, only if it is in a position to realise the eternal difference between the spiritual and the material. The account of the devotees will then be truly understood and it cannot be understood in any other way even by the greatest intellectual giants of this world.

The process of the Transcendental Birth of Godhead is thus described in Sreemad *Bhāgavatam*. ‘Thereafter the Portion of the Changeless transmitted by Sree Vasudeva was conceived by Devaki of pure cognitive essence. Just as the quarter of the East conceives the image of the moon, Sree Devaki also conceived in the same manner Sree Hari, the Supreme Soul of all souls, by her non-mundane mind.’ This process is not confined to only Vasudeva and Devaki. It is the same also in the case of the devotees. Before Godhead manifests Himself to the devotee in the Visible Form, a long period passes during which He is manifest internally in his pure consciousness. ‘Thereafter as the quarter of the East holds the disc of the moon, Devaki of pure cognition by the process of initiation in Krishna by Surasena (Vasudeva) received in her transcendently pure heart Sree Achyuta, the Embodiment of the universal well-being, the Supreme Soul of all souls.’ From these statements of the *Bhāgavatam* it would appear that Sree Krishna first appeared in the *heart* of Ānakadundubhi and from there *appeared in the heart* of Sree Devaki. The entry into the womb of Sree Devaki alluded to in the Nativity Hymn of the *Bhāgavatam* is *not different* from the above.

Godhead and His devotees are not born by the operation of the material Energy by means of the seminal fluid and blood, etc. The greatest of all offences that it is possible to commit against the Divinity is to suppose that His Body is material like that of the bound *jīva*. Godhead and His devotees have no material bodies and are not born by the operation of any material conditions. The Appearance of Sree Chaitanya and His devotees is free from any touch of the material principle. This is the realisation of all the devotees in accordance with the declaration of the Scriptures. Theistic history, although it certainly transcends and explains,

does not ignore this phenomenal world; and those, who object to the transcendental on the ground that it is not confirmable by the worldly experience of men, do not thereby disprove either the reality or the necessity of such history.

The successive disappearances of eight daughters, followed by the appearance of Viswarup and Sree Chaitanya, the two Sons, of Sree Sachi Devi, are explained on the analogy of the case of Sree Devaki recorded in the *Bhāgavatam* as symbolising the esoteric fact that the Appearance of Sree Krishna is preceded by that of Samikarsana, the Pure Cognitive Principle Who manifests Himself on the subsidence of the eightfold envelope of physical Nature, *viz.*, the eight pseudo-egoistic principles, that bars the access of the bound *jīva* to the transcendental.

The necessity of the closest consideration of the difference between the spiritual and material can alone enable one to reconcile the apparently contradictory statements regarding the Absolute that are a subject of standing complaint to all who, for extraneous reasons, do not seek the explanation in the Scriptures themselves. The Lord says: 'I exist eternally; nothing existed before Me, neither the non-existent nor the existent and nothing exists to the end and beyond the end except Myself. Therefore, those foolish persons, who think slightlying of My Human Form, do so through ignorance of My real Nature Who transcends everything of this world. They think that I am like themselves subject to the laws that have been made by Myself. They cannot understand that I exist in absolute independence of all rules which only serve to manifest Myself; and that I am the Supreme Lord of everything including all rules and conditions. Therefore, I can make My real Form visible to mortal eyes without ceasing to be the Master of this world and without submitting to any laws of physical Nature, and may at the same time delude all those who are averse to Me by appearing to them as an ordinary human being, subject, like themselves, to the operation of the laws of this universe. Know that this is the specific privilege reserved for Godhead, and herein lies the proof of His Supremacy, that He remains unaffected by the qualities of physical Nature even when He appears to be situated within its sphere.' Godhead has a specific Personality of His own, but He is subject to no limita-

tions. In Him all opposite qualities meet and are reconciled losing all their apparent grossness. But He also chooses to appear as an abstract principle to the idealist and as capable of grossness to the materialist, who are thus punished for trying to make the Absolute submit to their deluded speculations.

Sree Chaitanya appeared in this world on the full-moon eve of the month of *Falgun*, that most glorious eve of spring, which is reverentially consecrated to the Swinging Festival of Sree Krishna, like unto the spotless Moon risen on the Eastern Hills of Gaudadesha, the lunar disc itself having just then undergone a total eclipse. His Advent was greeted by an outburst of the universal chant of the *Name Hari* by all people of Nadia. In the midst of this unconscious jubilation, the Baby came out of the mother's womb and began at once to smile. Sachi and Jagannāth were transformed into the very image of joy on beholding the beautiful Face of their Son. The ladies in attendance got perplexed and did not know what to do and accordingly began, for no reason, to shout '*Jais'* (jubilations).

The glad tidings quickly brought together all the relations and friends who dwelt in the neighbourhood. We have already related the communication of Sree Nilāmbar Chakravarti, father of Sachi Devi, to Misra regarding the marvellous signs that he noticed on the Person of the new-born Babe. Nilāmbar Chakravarti was a very great astrologer. After considering the positions of the planets and the constellations at the Birth of the Child, he declared that the Boy would be far greater than a 'King', greater than Brihaspati, the celestial sage, in learning and would without effort come to possess all good qualities. Presently there arrived by accident a certain Brāhmaṇa, also an astrologer, who applied himself to the casting of the horoscope of the Newborn. That Brāhmaṇa declared as the result of his calculations that the Boy is no other than Nārāyaṇa Himself. 'He will re-establish the Religion. He will be the extraordinary Preacher of the Religion. He will deliver the whole world. All persons will obtain from Him what is constantly coveted by the greatest devotees, such as Brahmā, Siva, Suka, etc. At the sight of Him all the people of the world will be melted to pity for all *jīvas*, become indifferent to pain and pleasure alike, and attain to love for Him the Embodi-

ment of love for Krishna. Not to speak of others, even the Yavanas, who are declared enemies of Vishnu, will worship the Feet of this Child. All the countless worlds will sing His praise. All people, from the Brāhmaṇas downwards, will do obeisance to Him. His Form is the very Embodiment of the religion of the greatest devotees, the Embodiment of patience and of respect for the gods, Brāhmaṇas, preceptors and parents. Just as Vishnu appearing in this world persuades all *jivas* to religion, exactly same will be all the Doings of this Child. How fortunate indeed am I to be called to calculate such a horoscope! His name will be Sree Vishwambhar.' The astrologer purposely omitted to mention the Renunciation of Sree Chaitanya, lest it would mar the unmixed happiness of the occasion.

Misra was so greatly moved by these statements that he first of all thought of offering a suitable reward to the astrologer; but, presently remembering the extreme poverty of himself, grasped the feet of the Brāhmaṇa and burst into tears, unable any longer to contain his joy. That Brāhmaṇa also wept, clasping the feet of Sree Jagannāth Misra. All the people caught the impulse and joyously shouted the Name of Hari. The friends and well-wishers of Misra, on hearing of the nature of the Divine Horoscope, joined in this loud demonstration of joy.

It may interest the reader to be reminded of the fact that the great astrologer Garga who calculated the horoscope of Sree Krishna is described in the *Bhāgavatam* as a Brāhmaṇa skilled in the transcendental science. The Name Viswambhara is applied to Vishnu in the Atharva-Veda Samhita (2-3-4-5) and means 'One Who holds or nourishes the world'.

Sachi noticed female figures, who were divinely beautiful, who smilingly put blades of the *durbā* with grains of unhusked rice on the Head of the Infant and uttered the benedictory formula, 'Live Thou for ever', and who took the dust of her feet on their heads as they departed. Sachi was dumb with joy and could not even ask the names of those new-comers. These performances were accompanied by the customary song, dance and music of the professional musicians on such occasions.

The Baby had to remain for a full month in the lying-in chamber according to custom. The small hut, that was made for the occasion for the temporary accommodation of the mother and the Child, was watched night and day by all kinsfolk. This was due to two reasons. The Boy cried incessantly and kept quiet only just as long as He heard the Name of Hari uttered in a loud voice. This was soon grasped by all, who chanted aloud the Name of Hari, as soon as the Child began to cry, as the only means of pacifying Him. There was another reason for constant vigilance. There was an unaccountable fear, which was shared by all persons, that the life of the Baby was in danger from goblins and thieves. They accordingly often recited the customary invocations to Vishnu and Devi for the protection of the Child. The Name of Nrisimha was often similarly taken. *Mantrams* were used to render all sides of the hut secure against evil influences. But notwithstanding all these precautions, there were frequent alarms caused by supposed detection of the egress of thieves and goblins who often made their way into the house unperceived even by such a large body of devoted watchers. It was, in fact, the gods who played all these pranks for a sight of the Baby and lingered to amuse on the causeless anxiety of all persons on the Baby's account.

At the end of the period of confinement all the ladies accompanied Sree Sachi Devi for her bath in the *Bhagirathi*. After bathing in the river and having worshipped the Ganges, they made their way to the grove of the goddess 'Sasthi' accompanied by singers and musicians. On their return to the house, Sachi honoured every one of the party by presents of fried rice, plantain, oil, vermillion, areca-nut and betel. Thereupon the ladies went back to their homes after greeting the feet of the mother.

Orthodox *smārtha* Hindus are likely to read in the above account an apparent justification of their customary practices as being confirmed, by having been duly observed by Sree Jagannāth Misra and Sree Sachi Devi whose minds are free from all impurities and errors. Those, on the other hand, who look upon such local Hindu practices as being due to ignorance of the *Shāstras*, superstition or historical circumstances, will also naturally experience a certain measure of the qualms of an outraged

conscience if they have to prepare to swallow these descriptions, with the best of grace that they can call to their help, through sheer good-will for an otherwise untenable cause. Historians will feel scandalized by this attempt to chronicle the *unnecessary* details of such *petty domestic* matters that are perfectly known to everybody. Those, who look for the account of the Absolute as a *philosophical realisation*, will regard it as puerile sentimentalism. Those, who believe in the Personal God but expect a narrative in keeping with the supreme dignity of the Subject, may also be disposed to scratch their heads. And the atheists will *pooh pooh* what they will at once recognize as a brazen, ridiculous, insipid, and silly attempt of passing off the *minutæ* of Bengali superstitious usages upon credulous religionists in the name of the latest Divine Dispensation, etc., etc.

But the reader, who has followed the narrative so far, need not be told that events that happen in this world are divisible into two groups that are quite distinct from one another, *viz.*, (1) those events that take place on the physical plane, and (2) those that occurring on the spiritual manifest themselves also on the mundane plane. The Birth of Godhead in this world is an Event that belongs to the second group. It appears like an event belonging to the first group, to all bound *jivas* for the reason that they try to see Godhead by their own right, whereas the Absolute never submits to the inspection of the limited. To such people accordingly even the Transcendental Activities of Godhead appear as limited occurrences capable of being accurately graded in an order of importance (?).

But Krishna is declared by the Scriptures to be identical with the Absolute Truth Whose Activities admit of no such offensive classifications. Good and bad, great and small, are notions that only belong to the realm of the relative, limited, divisible and fragmentary knowledge. The Reality is Only One, in spite of the fact that only a perverted view of Him happens to be the sole, undoubted birthright of all conditioned souls. No event is really good or bad, small or great. All events are of infinite dimensions and instinct with the cognitive potency. They appear to be limited, inert, cramped and possessed of unwholesome qualities to those

jivas whose own natures seem to their deluded judgment to be limited, inert, cramped and gross for the time being. The vision of the devotee is free from all defects, and when they describe to us what they see, we, conditioned souls, pretend to feel in duty bound to disagree with them on the strength of our own unreliable but actual experience of those very same events.

No petty domestic event of this world, meaning what appears as such to the vision of bound *jivas*, can have even its so-called limited existence, unless it belongs to the realm of *Vaikuntha* where it can be also neither petty nor great in the material sense. The domestic events, connected with Godhead Himself (and His own) when He chooses to appear in this world, possess this additional peculiarity that they are really free from all grossness even from the point of view of the bound *jiva*, if he does not deliberately shut his eyes and ears and refuse to see and hear. That is to say, if he only really begins to see and hear with an unbiased mind, he at once realises this *truth* for himself. This process is known as the *descent* of the transcendental into this world. The birth and activities of conditioned souls (*jivas*) do not possess the transcendental quality. Their bodies and minds are of this world and their activities are only unsubstantial mimicries of the Reality. This mimicry is not Absolute but relative reality, being the result of the operation of the deluding power of Godhead. Its existence is not denied, nor its nature which is, however, categorically different from that of the spiritual. Its essence is comparable to that of the reflected image of the actual form of an object. By no manner of inspection of the image a knowledge of the nature and qualities of the actual substance can be obtained. But when the actual substance presents itself to our inspection, we can easily get the true knowledge of it, if only we do not perversely choose to regard it as image on the strength of deceptive analogical arguments supplied by our exclusive experience of a world of reflected images.

The paternal affection of Sree Jagannāth Misra and Sree Sachi Devi for Sree Gaurasundar is also likewise different from the apparently similar affection of mundane parents for their mundane child. In the former case, the Parents, Son and Affec-

tion are real and free from all worldly grossness, while the latter is a perverted mimicry of the same event reflected on the screen of the physical plane. But this qualitative difference between the two cannot be grasped by those who have not the patience to give an unbiased hearing to the words of the devotees describing the Reality Who alone possesses an unclouded vision, even though they may appear to hasty, prejudiced or superficial observers to be in no way unlike ordinary bound *jivas*. The devotees *alone* can teach us the real meaning of the Scriptures, and our duty, as will appear from what has been said already, consists in listening to their words with faith in order to be able to understand what they have got to deliver.

The affection of Sree Jagannāth Misra and Sree Sachī Devī for their Divine Son, being the Substantive Reality deserves to be considered by all bound *jivas* from every angle of vision with the object not of ignoring but of understanding its transcendental nature.

Sree Jagannāth Misra and Sree Sachī Devī, by reason of their perfect purity of heart, when they desired to have a Son born to them, could only mean to serve Godhead thereby. This exclusive and real reference to Him in every act is innate in the only function of the pure cognitive principle. A really pure heart is not satisfied with the mundane relationship, neither does it want to lose the faculty for contracting all relationship. It wants to realise all relationships in their true forms. This is its very nature who finds himself thwarted at every step in the conditioned state by undesirable factors. The ascetic's heart is not really pure, if it stands merely for the negation of all attachments for the reason that they happen to be always of a mixed character in this world. Such a view errs by seeking the ease of its deluded self by the self-contradictory process of suicide. This is the strange aspiration of all negativist thinkers. Those, whose hearts are somewhat purer, try to adjust themselves to *existing conditions* to the best of their power. They also err in as much as they vainly try to deal with the shadow by gratuitously assuming it to be the substance. This wild goose-chase goes in our *Shāstras* under the name of *fruitive work (Karma)*. Those, whose hearts

are purest, begin to see the impossibility and unwholesomeness of the task that is attempted by fruitive workers and the suicidal policy of nihilistic thinkers and ascetics. It is at this stage that the Reality manifests Himself of His own accord to the absolutely pure vision. And as soon as such favoured persons have thus a vision of the Truth, they want to communicate the tidings of Him to their suffering brethren; but they soon find that the hearts of the latter are not sufficiently pure either to grasp or even tolerate the real Truth Whom they also profess with their lips to be willing to serve. Such perverse people can hardly be expected to understand the nature of the longing for a Son of Sree Jagannāth Misra and Sree Sachī Devī, nor the reason of their causeless and holy joy on beholding the beautiful Face of New-born Gaur-sundar.

Of course neither Sree Jagannāth Misra nor Sree Sachī Devī was aware that their Son was Sree Krishna Himself. They simply looked upon Sree Gaur-sundar as their Son Whom it was their duty and pleasure to serve in every way. This is also the highest form of the spiritual service. The Lord can be served in all circumstances and under every form. He is served as a Son, because a perfectly pure heart serves nothing except the Lord, but also does so unconsciously by reason of the very perfection of his serving disposition. Those, who want to serve Sree Krishna as their Son in a conscious way, are not altogether free from the idea of reverence due to Godhead! They will fail to practise the unmixed parental affection for the Lord, if they are at all conscious of His Divinity. In such a case they will revere and love Him. Such parental affection does not perfectly please Godhead, the Son. He wants to be served with the perfect impulse of unmixed parental love which is absolutely free from any considerations that stand in the way of loving by a spontaneous impulse. In such hearts the Lord Himself appears as the Son Who is also entirely dependent on His parents for His safety and nourishment.

It will appear, therefore, that the only condition of the service of the Lord is a perfectly pure heart. No opposition to form is admissible. Therefore, those who look only to the form, may

suppose that the customs of Bengal or India *should* be adopted, if the Lord is to be properly served. This is the national or *smārta* point of view.

The perfectly pure heart is neither wedded, nor opposed, to the form of the mundane customs of any Age or country. What he wants to do is to serve the Lord. Any real method is legitimate that actually enables him to do this one thing needful. If he appears thereby to put himself even under specific restraints, he does so for all the greater facility of such unconditional service. Why the devotee behaves in a particular way is known only to himself and to Krishna. It is not something external and capable of external regulation or explanation. It is perfectly free. It cannot be squeezed into the four corners of a social or a tentative religious code. *Whatever* the devotee does is right and proper by reason of his exclusive devotion to Sree Krishna. Sree Jagannāth Misra and Sree Sachi Devi really belong to this superior plane. Their conduct should not be supposed to come under any class of activities capable of being regulated by a conventional and rigid code of rules. Rules are intended for those who are disinclined to serve, *i.e.*, for *restraining* those who are disposed to worldliness, for the purpose, if possible, of preventing a conduct that is incompatible with real freedom. But the rules themselves are not identical with freedom. The strict observance of any rules cannot produce the purity of heart that is necessarily free. Therefore, one must not allow himself to be unduly obsessed by these rules, when one has to consider the transcendental conduct of the real devotee. We should rather try to understand the limits of the rules from the conduct of the devotee. It is only the underlying principle of devotion to Godhead that can impart any value to such rules.

The worship of the Ganges and of the goddess '*Sasthi*' by Sree Sachi Devi are such concrete processes. In her case they were rendered of universal significance fit for the service of the Lord by reason of her devotion to Sree Gaursundar. This led the Lord Himself to directly accept any service, whatever its form, that was rendered by her pure heart. Whatever method is adopted for the service of the Lord forthwith loses its mundane cha-

racter by reason of its being so employed and becomes spiritual on being accepted by Krishna. All those, who watched the Baby and recited invocatory verses calling upon Devi and Nrisimha for the protection of the Baby, also served the Lord in the perfect manner, because they served Him spontaneously. Whenever any efforts are directed towards the Divinity without reservation, they automatically lose all their unwholesomeness for the reason that God is pleased to accept our whole-hearted service. This causeless Divine mercy towards all souls prompted the Appearance of Sree Gaurasundar in this world.

It will thus appear that *any and all* exercise of the senses, when it is really directed towards the Lord of our senses, is perfect, while apparently the same activity, when it is practised towards any other object, is not only not perfect but is positively harmful being obstructive of the possibility of attainment of the natural function. In the language of the Vaishnavas, "Serving Sree Krishna with all our spiritual senses, is '*love*'; while similarly serving any other object is '*lust*'." Or to put it in another way, 'the desire to gratify the senses of Krishna is *love*, while the wish to satisfy one's own senses is *lust*'. The proposition is liable to be misunderstood and, as a matter of fact, has actually been misunderstood, in different ways. The psilanthropists have supposed that it is mundane relationship with Krishna that is recommended. But as Krishna is not available in a bodily form in this world, they accordingly want to devise a method of serving themselves by personating Krishna and the milk-maids, or trying to imagine that they are spiritually occupied in every act of their gross sensuality. They choose to think gratuitously that Krishna is a being of this world like themselves. There is another class of psilanthropists who proceed in the negative way, being repelled by the debaucheries of the first group. These suppose that it is a sin to believe that the Absolute can at all be served in a concrete manner. The Absolute is accordingly supposed to be capable of being served *only* on the *mental* plane by the homage of thought. These psilanthropists keep their life in its concrete acts strictly separate from the Absolute reserving it for the gratification of their own sensuous desires excusing themselves by imagining that

this is unavoidable *as long as they continue in the state of mundane existence.* They supplement their disregard of the virtuous activities of this life by an endeavour to rise *above them* (?) by meditation (?) on the Activities (?) of Krishna, or by fictitious avoidance of all thinking.

In these ways the people of this world delude themselves by the pernicious practice of actual debauchery or by hypocritical and impracticable abstention into supposing that their method is higher than that of professed sensualists. But in both cases the root of the error is the same, *viz.*, the belief that Krishna, when He chooses to appear to us in the Human Form, puts on a body of flesh like ourselves and that, therefore, those, who served Him at the time of His Appearance in different ways as servants, friends, parents, sweet-hearts, practised activities that are in no way different from those with which we ourselves are so familiar in this world and from the grossness of which we have no desire of seeking to escape. The one class directly swallows the mud, the other group pretends to live on nectar while actually deriving their sustenance from the same polluted source but with great labour and through a longer pipe. None of them suspect that it is the mud, nor that it is capable of being transformed into nectar by the real Touch of the Divinity, or, in other words, that there is a third alternative to enjoyment and hypocritical show of abstention which has the form of spiritual service that transcends both and reconciles those opposites on a higher plane. What is really necessary is not to wrangle over the sharing of the mud, but to be lifted out of such necessity for feasting on the manna. The idealist's position is a mere travesty by which the love of gross matter is attempted to be disguised from the observation of dull persons. But it only mocks the thirsty soul by the offer of the masked bowl of the dregs of the noxious preparation, in place of the ostentatiously filled cup of poison, to the thirsty soul who has need of only the life-giving drink.

CHAPTER IV

INFANCY AND BOYHOOD

BUT although Sree Gaurasundar submitted to be served by the unconscious perfect love of *Braja* by His parents, relatives, friends and servants, His Divinity was manifested in every Act of His Infancy, unnoticed by anyone. This is the *hidden Leelā* of Sree Chaitanya. He can never be really known except through His Grace which is available to all *jīvas* who sincerely seek to obtain it.

The Baby continued to keep everybody occupied by His peculiar Ways. The most noticeable of these was that He would begin to cry if He did not hear the loud chant of the Name of Hari. So He was always surrounded by a group of ladies who sang constantly the *kirtan* in order to keep Him in countenance. The moment they would begin to perform *kirtan*, the Boy showed every mode of delight and would laugh in the most enchanting manner. They clapped their hands, sang and considered themselves amply repaid by His Sweet Smiles. This was noticed and advertised by everybody as a most extraordinary circumstance. The conduct of the Baby and the devoted attachment of the ladies, who were so loath to leave His Presence form a most striking episode on which all narratives of His Infancy love to dwell with great tenderness.

The Lord used always to lie on His Back surrounded by the ladies, except while He slept. One day Sachi was brought to the room, where the Baby slept, by His waking cry. As she entered the apartment, she was surprised to find the floor of the room littered with all different substances. Oil, ghee, milk, curd, pulse, etc., with broken earthen pots, were all jumbled together in every part of the room. Sachi Devi chanted the Name of Hari in order

to pacify the Baby of barely four months, who lay crying in His little bed. She noticed the presence of no other person in the room. Other members of the family presently came to the spot, but no one could discover any trace of an intruder. Some opined that a demon must have found his way into the room but failed to do any harm to the Child by reason of His protective amulet. His failure to harm the Baby had made him angry and commit all the mischief before he fled back to his place. Jagannāth Misra on beholding the scene of havoc said nothing, regarding it as an act of the gods. The parents thought in this wise in their joy that no harm had befallen the Baby.

There was some funny incident or other like this every day, to afford an opportunity of service to the parents and others. Their service must not be supposed to be on a level with the activities of worldly people who are always very much attached to their own children. The affection of worldly people for their children is purely an attachment of the flesh for the flesh that serves to gratify their sensuous instincts. Such affection only rivets the chain of bondage to the thing of this world, all of which are the contrivances of the deluding Energy or non-God. It was not so in this case. The paternal affection, that serves Godhead, is not only altogether different from the apparently similar worldly sentiment, but, on the contrary, is so much opposed in its nature to the latter that the two cannot co-exist in the same heart. One who loves his worldly son, as son, can never realise the nature of the affection of Sree Sachi Devi and Sree Jagannāth Misra for Sree Gaurasundar, because the worldly passion itself stands in the way of such realisation.

The time passed in such pastimes till at last the day of naming the Baby made its appearance. For this purpose there assembled a number of friends versed in the Scriptures, chief of whom was Sree Nilāmbar Chakravarti. There was also a corresponding gathering of the matrons. The latter declared that the Baby should be called 'Nimāi' after the 'Neem' tree, for the reason that the bitter taste characteristic of the said tree would repel the god of death who had taken away so many children of His parents, and would also serve to scare away ghosts, demons and other evil

spirits. The learned headed by Nilāmbar Chakravarti agreed to accept the Name 'Nimāl' as a secondary one, and proposed 'Viswambhar' as the *primary* Name of the Baby. The reason given for their choice of this Name was that the fear of famine, which had threatened the whole country, had been dissipated by the Birth of the Child, which had brought in its train copious showers of rain after a prolonged drought. As the Birth of the Child had saved the world from famine, the Name Viswambhar was appropriate for Him as it means '*One Who maintains the world*'. Another reason for the selection of the Name was that in His horoscope the Boy was described as 'the *Source-light*' which meant that 'all other lights (of the family) were derived from this One'. The ceremony was performed at an auspicious moment amidst the holy chant of the Name of Hari, the sound of conches and bells, by men and gods, while the Brāhmaṇas read the *Geetā* and the *Bhāgavatam*.

Naming a baby is one of the ten purificatory rites that are enjoined by the Shāstras and are performed by the *smārtas* to free a new-born child from sin due to the impurities of seminal birth from the mother's womb. The sin as well as its expiatory rite, as contemplated by the *smārtas*, are conceived in terms of material well-being. There is no question in it of the soul, or spiritual consideration. The birth of a bound *jīva* is no doubt a material circumstance and the *smārta* rites are also admittedly a material device to ward off certain worldly results of such birth. The material world being the limit of the *smārta* outlook, a *smārta* family adheres to those ceremonies in the hope of the mundane reward promised by the sections of the Scriptures that treat of fruitive works and ceremonies. But a Vaishnava has nothing to do with any so-called mundane well-being that has no connection with the soul. Moreover Sree Gaurasundar's Birth, or the birth of any devotee of Godhead, as we have seen already, is never to be considered, for very good reasons, as a temporal affair at all. What, therefore, it may be asked, is the significance of the parents of Sree Gaurasundar following the *smārta* practice that has led the Vaishnava narrators of the Career of Sree Chaitanya to write of it as a praise-worthy performance?

We have already considered a similar objection in connection with the worship of the goddess *Sasthi* by Sree Sachi Devi. The Vaishnavas regard the presiding deities of this mundane world as servants of Krishna and honour them as such. They do not regard them as independent divinities. They never worship these gods for securing any worldly advantages which are bestowed by them in accordance with the Will of Godhead. The Vaishnavas hold that those gods are not fully pleased if they are worshipped for worldly favours; and, as servants of Godhead, they are also not entitled to be worshipped on their own account. They are fully and truly served by the worship of Godhead. And, therefore, the Vaishnavas worship only Vishnu. The worship of the goddess *Sasthi*, who is protectress of new-born babies, in the case of Sree Sachi Devi, did not, however, degenerate into polytheism or atheism for the reason that it happened to be performed for the sake of God Himself. Any act that possesses this characteristic is essentially spiritual. The conduct of Sachi cannot, therefore, serve as a precedent to justify the similar materialistic *smārta* practices which have nothing to do with Godhead.

The above argument applies to the performance by Sachi of all other Shāstric rites also. Those acts being performed for the sake of Godhead Himself are thereby converted into spiritual service of Godhead. Instead of being a cause of further bondage, which is the desired result of the *smārta* practices, the apparently similar activities of Sree Jagannāth Misra and Sree Sachi Devi add a new variety of exquisiteness to the service of Godhead, in the shape of parental affection.

The Name Viswambhar should not also be supposed to be on a level with the ordinary names that are bestowed on babies on this occasion by the *smārta* priests. The reason for the choice of the Name, as given out by Sree Nilāmbar Chakravarti, the great astrologer of Nabadwip of his day, has been already reproduced. That statement deliberately conceals, under metaphorical garb, the Truth that revealed Himself clearly to him. The Name 'Viswambhar' is a well-known Shāstric Name of the Divinity. The Name refers specifically to the Acts of two *Avatāras* of Vishnu, viz., the Varāha (Boar) and the Hayagṛiba (Horse-headed). The

Former lifted with His Tusk the world submerged by the Deluge, while the Latter rescued the Vedas when they were on the point of being suppressed by materialistic learning. Anyone with a slight acquaintance with the Scriptures would, in thinking of Godhead, connect these events with the Name 'Viswambhar'. The Name 'Nimāi', intended to scare away premature death and all fear, is also perfectly applicable to Godhead. But this is not all. Gargāchāryya, who calculated the Name of Sree Krishna, is described in the *Bhāgavatam* as being the greatest of those who know the *Brahman* and was selected for this reason by King Nanda to choose the Name of his New-born Son. In fact no one who has not access to the spiritual realm, can know the Name of the Divinity.

The Holy Name of Godhead is eternal and is *identical* with Godhead Himself. In the case of Godhead there is no difference between Name, Form, Quality, Acts and Associates, as we find on the finite plane in the case of conditioned souls. The eternal Name of God, Who manifested Himself to the pure consciousness of Sree Gargāchāryya, made Himself known to the people of this world under the guise of the ceremony of Naming the Divine Baby, for the highest benefit of the conditioned souls. The Names Viswambhar and Nimāi similarly made Themselves known through Sree Nilāmbar Chakravarti and the pure-hearted matrons, not to cleanse the so-called impurities of birth of the material body of a new-born child which is the object of the *smārīa* ceremony, but in order to bless the whole world by making it possible for all conditioned souls to take the Holy Names of Godhead, identical with Godhead Himself and having the specific power, if taken without offence, *i.e.*, with the object of realising one's eternally loving relationship with God, to deliver all fallen *jīvas* from the bondage of this world.

Sree Gargāchāryya disclosed the Names Rāma and Krishna, the most cherished Treasures of his heart that was eternally illuminated with Their Divine Radiance, confidentially to a few devotees only, lest They came to the ears of atheists like Kamsa who might be betrayed into the offence of confounding Them with ordinary appellations of things of this world. The *shloka* of the

Bhāgavata embodying the statement of Garga on this subject, also contains one of the few direct explicit references to the Appearance of Krishna in the *Kali Age*. The *shloka* may be quoted at this place: 'This Son of yours, O Nanda, assumes different Colours in the different Ages. His Colour is White in the *Satya Age*, Red in the *Treta*, and *Gaura*, i.e., Yellow tinctured with Red, in the *Kali Age*. His Colour in this present Age (*Dvāpara*) is Black as you see.'

On the occasion of naming a baby there is an old custom of putting to the new-born child a variety of articles to induce him to choose any of them, in order to ascertain the natural bent of the infant. In pursuance of this time-honoured custom a number of objects were held out to Nimāi, such as unhusked rice, books, fried rice, cowrie, gold, silver, etc. Sree Jagannāth Misra then called upon the Child to choose whichever of them He liked. Nimāi clasped the *Bhāgavatam* tightly to His Bosom. Some said that it was a very good augury and prognosticated that the Child would be a great Pandit. Others said He would be a Vaishnava and would easily understand the meaning of the Scriptures. The preference shown for the *Bhāgavatam* by Nimāi may be explained as meaning that the acquisition of the riches of this world and even the maintenance of the body should not be valued for their own sake and that the unalloyed service of the Lord, which is expounded in the *Bhāgavata*, is the one thing needful and includes all the rest.

This old custom may be interpreted as supplying a clue to another matter of importance. Why was it necessary for the father, the natural guardian of the infant, to try to ascertain the tendency of his new-born Child? If the boy had chosen gold and silver, or fried rice, what inference would be drawn? Would such inference have any effect on the future of the Boy? If the son of a Brāhmaṇa is supposed to possess the nature of a Brāhmaṇa by reason of seminal birth, why should he be again subjected to a further test based on a different principle? How was the *varna* (disposition) of a Brāhmaṇa really settled in very old times? In the case of Nimāi it was comparatively easy by the above test to arrive at a favourable conclusion. The *Bhāgavata* has been de-

clared to be the exposition of the holy *Gāyatrī*, i.e., the *mantram*, the knowledge of which is essential for the Brāhmaṇa. The choice of the *Bhāgavatam* by Nimbā, therefore, clearly would mark Him out as possessing the natural disposition of a Brāhmaṇa.

If seminal birth had been sufficient by itself to confer the *varna* of a Brāhmaṇa, there would have been no meaning of the ceremony of spiritual purification by *Gāyatrī*; nor would the latter process be significantly styled *the second birth*. The texts support the view that the *varna* of a Brāhmaṇa has to be fixed by natural disposition. There is also *no* text that attaches exclusive value to the seminal birth for the ascertainment of natural disposition. There are also many actual cases of the condition (*varna*) of a Brāhmaṇa having been acquired by persons who were not born in Brāhmaṇa families. Conversely we find that all the sons of a Brāhmaṇa did not necessarily become Brāhmaṇas in every case. The *varna* of the one hundred sons of Rshabha Deva was settled by their respective dispositions. Some of them were found to be Kshatriyas, some were recognised as Brāhmaṇas, while nine were declared to be Vaishnavas. The status of each was settled by the Father Who is *Avatāra* of the Divinity. The bad effects and futility of trying to fix the spiritual status (*varna*) of a Brāhmaṇa by birth alone are most vividly brought out in the career of Prahlāda on whom his father Hiranyakashipu tried forcibly to impose his own creed and occupation with the help of 'hereditary' preceptors.

The effects of heredity and education in forming one's disposition are overvalued by those who try to deduce everything from them. Heredity itself is a complex matter and runs backward in an endless ramification of ancestry through father and mother. No empiric pronouncement on the basis of heredity can be made, unless the nature of the whole of these two series is definitely known. Education, in so far as it tries to artificially widen our worldly experience, is also most uncertain in its operation on disposition. Seminal birth has been considered by the most ambitious of its modern empiric protagonists as decisive in settling one's physical and mental disposition that are closely interconnected. In our old Scriptures seminal birth as well as secular and even

empiric knowledge of the Scriptures are categorically differentiated from the *Gāyatrī* birth and the transcendental knowledge respectively. The latter is nowhere declared as capable of being derived, or even helped in any way, by the former. The natural disposition of a Brāhmaṇa, that is conferred by the purificatory ceremony of the *Gāyatrī mantram*, and the transcendental knowledge, that is the result of initiation by the spiritual preceptor, refer to the soul and have nothing to do with the secondary enveloping disposition that manifests itself, when the soul is engrossed in, i.e., incompatibly associated with, matter. Brāhmaṇahood, according to the *Mahābhāratam*, means the condition of a person possessing the disposition that seeks to realise the nature of the soul and accordingly the status of a Brāhmaṇa should be conferred only on those persons in whom such disposition manifests itself, and by no other consideration.

The spiritual status of the Brāhmaṇa cannot be tested and settled by any one who does not himself possess the realised Brāhmaṇa disposition, that is to say, by no one except the spiritual preceptor. The purificatory rite is the authoritative recognition by the Guru of the possession of such disposition by the disciple. The recognition by the Guru also serves to bring into play the spiritual disposition. By mechanically mimicking the external rite, only confusion is caused, as it has been caused in the past, and is being still caused, by the unprincipled ambitions of men who are inordinately proud of their high lineage and worldly qualities. Unless the superior status corresponds to the internal disposition there can be no proper subordination of the worldly to the spiritual interest which is sought to be effected by the *varnāshrama* organisation under the lead of the Brāhmaṇas. This settlement of the status (*varna*) of a person was made soon after the birth of a child with the help of competent persons in order to provide specific training suited to the particular nature of the new-born child, for inclining him towards the spiritual life from the very beginning of his worldly sojourn. This may sound far too advanced an arrangement to be achieved in such remote antiquity which modern history teaches us, on no conclusive evidence, to regard as having been universally utterly backward and benighted. Spiritual enlighten-

ment is an eternal affair and has always possessed the inclination as well as capacity of organising the spiritual community in its minutest details for helping the realisation of the theistic ideal. The weakness, that is nowadays noticeable in the historical organisation of *caste* which is regarded as the residual legatee of the *varnāshrama* organisation, is due to atheistical preponderance. As the spiritual life slackened its manifestation in this world, the *varnāshrama* organisation was increasingly neglected and was replaced by the meaningless, cumbrous and effete *caste system*. The pseudo-spiritual organisation, *viz.*, *caste*, failed to withstand the persevering onslaughts of organised materialism by means of its proper agents in the shape of the utterly barbarous tribes possessing no spiritual tradition, that dwelt beyond the Indian borderland, who banded together for the purpose of overthrowing a decayed spiritual society. The *morale* of the Indian people had been completely undermined by the rise of the pseudo-religious systems and practices and by the atheistic speculations of the philosophers, that have already been noticed briefly in a previous chapter.

After India had been subjugated by the brute force of these foreign invaders, attempts were made from time to time by the Vaishnava Āchāryyas to revive the theistic life in this country, against very great odds, in which they were not, however, permanently successful. This theistic re-action reached its culmination in the Activities of Sree Chaitanya Who propounded the comprehensive system, that provides the true remedy for all the ills of the world, resting on the broad base of the whole body of the spiritual Scriptures. The world is, however, not yet prepared to accept His Teaching in its entirety, although the leading scholars of all the centres of culture in India of His day were decisively vanquished in a series of open controversies. A great literature embodying the true scriptural doctrines was produced and the rejuvenated worship of Godhead was organised and provided with a considerable number of establishments in the form of the noblest shrines. The world was externally shaken by the mighty impulse, but failed to recover from its inner stupor and continued to drift aimlessly under the pilotage of professors of open and concealed atheism who quickly recovered their lead and even exploited the

elaborate form of the caste organisation that professes to represent the *varnāshrama* institution of the Scriptures, for the propagation of atheism. After the arrival of the Europeans, through the agencies of the newly-established secular universities and an organised industrial and commercial system, the people have been further inoculated with the secular outlook of materialistic civilization of a most thorough-going type. This new outlook is unhesitatingly distrustful of the existing social and religious systems of the country and is desirous of real reform but is far too materialistic in itself not to hesitate to welcome the Teaching of Sree Chaitanya, which is based on the Scriptures and which favours the rejuvenation of the theistic *varnāshrama* organisation of society.

This digression, if such it may perchance appear to be to the patient reader, from the regular track of our narrative, is necessary in order to prevent misconceptions regarding the Activities of the Infant Chaitanya which are quoted by His pseudo-followers of the present day in justification of their adoption of the current atheistical practices of the *smārta* caste organisation. The associates of Sree Chaitanya, however, arrived at a very different conclusion, that has been stated above, from the Acts of the Lord Himself as the Supreme Teacher by His Own Conduct.

Nimāi retained His habit of indulging in frequent fits of crying and would not be consoled by any of the methods that are usually effective in the case of ordinary children. He did not cry for having anything of this world. He used to cry in order to make those around Him chant constantly the Name of Hari. Nimāi would laugh and dance in the mother's lap at the sound of the *kirtan* of Hari with such extraordinary Grace of Expression and Movement of His Limbs that those, who chanted the Name of Hari to please Him, did so for their own pleasure. Those who are obstinately incredulous about the authenticity of the facts of religious history, need not reject these on the plea of want of contemporary evidence. They were faithfully put into writing by the eternal companions of Sree Chaitanya and none of the numerous enemies and opponents of Sree Chaitanya of that or subsequent Age ever thought of contradicting them on the ground that they were the concoctions of the imagination which should be

impossible in the case of a series of great writers, unless they deliberately conspired *for stating and accepting as facts* the products of their mesmerised imaginations.

Neither can we altogether admire the judgment of those secular historians who may be disposed to regard them as trivial and the explanations of them offered by the associates and followers of Sree Chaitanya, as laboured after-thoughts. To the candid reader the least of these so-called trifles and laboured after-thoughts may perchance possess more value for the real weal and woe of mankind in a proportion that is inversely proportional to the cumulative blighting influence of all the empirical accounts that have ever been written of the authentic deeds of the mighty heroes of this world.

Godhead, when He chooses to sport as Infant, is more fully Divine than when He plays the open role of the Supreme Ruler by His Omnipotence of all these countless worlds. His Activities in either case are, however, alike incomprehensible to the perverted understanding of the conditioned soul who is averse to His service. No Tittle of such Activities has also the least chance of suffering any exaggeration by any amount of our poor and misdirected human praise that may be wrongly lavished upon it. The praise of them that is practised by the devotees is the only method of enabling us to realise their most wonderful and exclusive fitness for *all* true praise. This is the *kirtan* of Krishna and it was this Truth Whom Infant Nimai constantly tried to impress on His attendants through their realised experience of Him, by making them sing constantly the *kirtan* of Hari without offence, i.e., in order to please the Lord Himself. This is the central subject of the Teaching of Sree Gaurasundar, and its importance and early manifestation have accordingly been noted with reverent admiration by those who had been enabled by the Grace of Sree Chaitanya to realise the Highest Truth to Whose service the *jīva* can aspire to attain by the loving service of the Truth Himself.

Lord Visvambhar now exhibited the Pastime of moving about on His Knees in the yard of Sachi. He sped about on His Knees with the most enchanting art, while the tiny bells on His Waist-band made a most delicious music. He roved over the yard most

fearlessly and grasped at everything that He saw, whether it was the fire or the venomous serpent.

One day while thus roaming the yard, Nimāi actually caught hold of a huge serpent that had found its way into the house. At the touch of the Child's Hand, the brute immediately coiled up. Viswambhar then quietly laid Himself down on the soft cushion of its coils. The sight of this sent a thrill of horror into the hearts of all who beheld it. In their utter dismay and helplessness they called upon Garuḍa to save the Child. The parents with many others set up a wail of great agony. Nimāi laughed as He lay couched on the coils of the monster. The lamentations of the onlookers at last induced the serpent to move off of its own accord. The Son of Sree Sachi pursued the retreating brute with the intent of catching it again. They dashed at the Child and brought Him away and pressed Him tightly to their bosoms. All the ladies blessed the Child saying, 'May Thou live for ever'. Some tied protective amulets, some recited texts of benediction, while some fetched the Feet-wash of Vishnu and sprinkled His body therewith. Some said that the Boy was born a second time. Some said that the serpent happened to be of the particular species that did no harm, which was the reason why His life was saved. Gaursundar only went on laughing and frequently essayed to make after the track of the serpent and was as often anxiously brought back by all the people.

The relation of all fearful objects to the Lord is the exact opposite of their relation to the *jīva*. Godhead is the Source of all fear. He is Fear Himself. Mahākāla, the Destroyer of all things, is afraid of Him. Those who love the Lord are not, therefore, afraid of anything. Those, who do not trust the Lord and think that the various dreadful objects are not afraid of Him, are necessarily afraid of them. All such fear is condemnable for the reason that it has no reference to Godhead and is, therefore, due to the anxiety for one's worldly safety. This looking away from Godhead to one's false self is the cause of all fear and is the reason why such fear is also sordid. The fear of Sachi and *Jagannāth* and of the assembled people for the safety of Nimāi does not belong to the category of such sordid fear and is, there-

fore, an event that deserves to be recorded and was also exhibited by them, by the beneficent contrivance of the Spiritual Power of the Lord, to teach the proper use of the instinct of fear to all ungodly conditioned souls.

Besides providing the opportunity of service to those devotees who did not know, by the force of the beneficent spiritual Power, that He was Godhead Himself, Sree Gaursundar also contrived to receive by this method the perfect homage of the most highly beloved of His fully conscious transcendental servitors whom He wanted to specially favour. Fire and the serpent, that were the causes of the consternation of friends and relatives, were respectively the god who identifies himself with the element of fire and Sree Ananta Deva Who is the Plenary Form of Sree Samkarsana and Who serves as the Couch of the Supreme Lord. Sree Gaursundar chose to receive their service for the purpose of His Pastime on this occasion. The pervert *yogi* only deludes the people by his display of seeming immunity from mundane fire and serpent in juggling imitation of these Acts of the Lord. Their exhibitions tempt other atheistical people like themselves to follow the method of the *astāṅga yoga* for the profane attainment of powers of apparent mastery over Nature. There are also people who are disposed to class Sree Chaitanya and His devotees with these pseudo-*yogis* and explain also Their Performances by the possession of improper *yogic* powers. But as a matter of fact the display of the pseudo-*yogic* power is *no* part of the function of the pure soul taught and practised by Sree Chaitanya and His associates. The power which the pervert *yogi* imagines as belonging to himself being acquired by his own meritorious endeavours, is a penal delusion which is as condemnable as the attempt of acquiring any other form of worldly power. It happens to possess the appearance of a superhuman entity in degree and measure, but is, as a matter of fact, only a still more objectionable form of selfish material enjoyment and only a potent means of self-deception or godlessness. For this reason, those, who try to understand the Doings of Sree Gaursundar and His devotees from the point of view of the *astāṅga yoga*, obtain, as the due punishment of their selfish labours, a further increase of aversion to Godhead.

CHAPTER V

BOYHOOD

AND now the Son of Sree Sachi Devi began to toddle on His tender legs. These pedestrian performances with uncertain steps were confined to the yard of Sree Sachi. The Child constantly moved about in the yard. Every limb of the Boy was most exquisitely beautiful. His Face was the envy of the Moon. His Head was beautifully rounded. A profusion of fine curls gracefully clustered round the Forehead. His Eyes were remarkably wide, resembling the petals of the lotus-flower. These reminded one of the Appearance of Boy-Krishna. His long Hands hang down to the Knees. The Lips were crimson. His Bosom was wide and possessed of every auspicious feature. The whole Form of Gaur had a most pleasing yellowish tint that matched Him to perfection. His Fingers, Hands and Feet were particularly beautiful. While the Lord tripped about in the haphazard fashion of children, the mother used to get alarmed, as it seemed to her that blood came out of the delicate Feet of the Boy as They pressed lightly on the ground.

The parents were unspeakably happy. They felt and whispered to each other that a great Personage was born in the family, which ensured deliverance of themselves and the family from the bondage of this world. These high hopes of the parents were confirmed by the peculiarity that the Child fell to crying if He did not hear the sound of the Name of Hari. He was the Very Embodiment of Joy, whenever the Name of Hari was chanted to Him by clap of hand, and would express His gladness by unceasing laughter and dancing as long as the Name of Hari continued to be sung. This circumstance drew all the ladies of the neighbourhood into the house from early dawn, who formed themselves into

a merry ring round Gaursundar and performed the *samkirtan* with clap of hand. The attentive Boy danced, rolled on the ground gray with dust, and, climbing into the lap of mother, burst into merry peals of laughter. He danced with such charming poses of the limbs that it filled all the onlookers with inexpressible delight. The Lord in this artless manner of childhood made all of them perform the *kirtan* of Hari: but they did not understand it.

As the Boy grew up He began to manifest great restlessness of disposition and constantly sped in and out of the house. He would frequently leave the house unattended and would beg from the passers-by fried rice, plantain, sweetmeats, and, in fact, whatever eatables they happened to be carrying. The extraordinary Beauty of the Boy softened everybody towards Him, and perfect strangers gave Him, as soon as they saw Him, whatever He asked. No sooner did He obtain any gift than He ran into the house with the greatest joy and gave it to those ladies who chanted the Name of Hari. Such precocity of the Child made all persons laugh with great delight, and they would continue to chant the Name of Hari with clap of hand. The Lord often left the house in this manner at all hours of the day and even in the evenings.

That the Holy Name of Godhead should be sung constantly, to the exclusion of every other activity, is a proposition that is repeatedly enjoined by the Scriptures, although it may appear at first sight to be impracticable. The mercenary preacher accepts a pecuniary remuneration for his exertions in delivering the Word of God on the ground that he must have something to live upon. How can the Name of Godhead be taken night and day without exposing oneself to sure starvation? The physical needs of the body compel every mortal to devote a part of his time to activities of this world. It may be urged with apparent reasonableness that the worldly activity for earning a livelihood is imperative and cannot be neglected by anybody in this world, whether he is a prince or a peasant, an atheist or a preacher of the Word of God. Therefore, the declaration of the Scriptures, that the chanting of the Name of Godhead *at all time* is the *only function* of every soul, requires to be liberally interpreted in its application to the people of this world. The impracticability is perfectly clear and simple and

can be understood even by a child. It is not possible that this obvious difficulty should have been overlooked and overruled by the numerous Scriptural declarations, unless for a very good reason. That reason is also quite plain and may be briefly stated as follows. Godhead Himself has the Power and the Will to provide for the maintenance of those who devote themselves wholeheartedly, night and day, to the performance of the *kirtan* of Himself. Wherefore, it is expressly forbidden in the Scriptures to *sell* the Word of God in exchange for anything. If a person, who sets up as a preacher of the Word of God, makes of it a trade for the maintenance of himself and his family, for lacking the necessary faith in the promise of Godhead that he need not think for his own maintenance, he thereby commits an act of disobedience against Godhead and by reason of such sinfulness becomes unfit to receive or still less convey to others the Holy Word of the Lord.

Sree Chaitanya taught that the Name of Godhead should be taken at all time with patience and humility. The patience consists in practising perfect reliance on the Word of God. The humility consists in giving up all thought of selfish enjoyment and accepting the desire to please and obey Godhead as the only object of one's serving activity. These considerations supply the real explanation of the otherwise mysterious Behaviour of the Divine Child. Godhead Himself procures the necessaries for the maintenance of every one who devotes himself to the chanting of the Name of God,—declare the Scriptures. The level of conduct of all preachers should come up to this cardinal fact of spiritual practice, if they expect to make their hearers believe, or make themselves believe, in the Truth of the Scriptures. Dancing and singing are forbidden to the Brāhmaṇas, *i.e.*, to those who know Godhead, except to serve the pleasure of Godhead and His devotees. The Brāhmaṇas alone, who abstain from singing and dancing for any worldly purpose, are not only fit, but it is their duty to dance and sing the *kirtan* of Hari for pleasing Godhead and His devotees.

Nimāi now set Himself to carrying out in a systematic manner a series of reckless depredations in the households of the friends of the family who resided in the neighbourhood. He took to thieving and it was His daily pastime to steal something or

other. He would stealthily drink the milk of one household, eat the cooked rice of another without notice, or, if He could obtain nothing to eat, He would break the earthen cooking-pots, of a third home. He would poke the babies put to sleep and make them cry, beating a hasty retreat the moment He was detected. If anybody chanced to catch Him at His tricks, He would fall at his feet and express repentance. 'Let Me go this time. I won't come again. I give My Word to you that I won't steal again.' Every one was astonished at such precocity of the little Child. No one was ever angered by these freaks; on the contrary, they all loved Him. Nay, they loved Him far more tenderly than they loved their own children. He stole away every faculty of the heart at the very first sight. The Divine Child took His pleasure in such extreme naughtinesses.

The Favour of God bears no resemblance to the favour that is expected from or conferred by worldly persons. We desire, by everything we do, only the gratification of our own senses in a gross or subtle form. When, therefore, we want to favour anybody, we naturally suppose that the only means of doing this is by providing him with the means of his sensuous gratification. 'All the ills that flesh is heir to' are traceable to this inveterate self-indulging principle of our conditioned nature. The elaborate social machinery, with its so-called ethical codes, has been devised for the express purpose of augmenting each man's average share of worldly enjoyment.

But we are all of us more or less conscious of the wild-goose-chase character of the pursuit of all worldly enjoyments. The causes of disappointment are many. Our hopes are never fully realised. The bliss, that we promise ourselves, invariably palls on its seeming attainment. We are perpetually oppressed with the sense of some besetting evil that poisons everything we desire to taste in the very act of tasting. We may be temporarily dazzled by worldly performances; but the inevitable dross is sure to discover itself in the long run in the most promising deeds of our lives. There is always this skeleton in the cupboard. The tragedies and comedies of worldly life alike repel us in the end by their grossness and triviality. Those, who consider it heroic to put

a good face on the inevitable, thereby only display their disinclination to honestly tackle the issue that confronts them all the same. The attitude of patience for the inevitable, which appeals so strongly to the so-called practical temperament, is tantamount to an avoidance to think on the solution a besetting problem under the tacit plea that one's duty is done by simply shutting one's eye to the inexplicable side of one's conduct.

But it is only a display of thoughtless egotism that imagines the presence of adverse circumstances and their abundance in this world for which the person himself is not in any way responsible. This attitude is both dishonest and shallow. It means only that one should consider it his duty to move heaven and earth for securing his own enjoyment and, after having secured a fair share of it, when he finds that it does not answer his purpose, must still go on advocating the wisdom of such course and shut his eyes to the real worthlessness of such policy. This attitude is possible only when a person is too much enamoured of the sensuous life despite its utterly disappointing quality. The faculties of the mind of such a person are viciously attracted towards hollow worldly advantages. He is so completely engrossed in his contemplation that he has neither time nor inclination to look to the other side.

To such people the conduct of the Boy Nimāi would appear to be not at all different from that of ordinary naughty children who often turn into moral men and women on attaining the age of discretion and whose childish vices, therefore, are a mere result of the exuberance of their animal spirit and should not be put in the same category with the objectionable vices of grown-up people. Even this sort of moral condonation of childish vices seems unnecessary to a school of thinkers who are disposed to give every child a long rope in order to enable him to develop freely all sides of his nature. According to this school, a virile and aggressive personality in the worldly sense is better than a regulated and cramped one. The conduct of Gauri Sundar and His parents may, therefore, meet with the worldly approval of people of this stamp.

But the attitude that the associates of Sree Gauri Sundar want us to realise in regard to these Activities of the Lord is different from what are recommended by both the above views. The

depredations that are committed against our worldly 'possessions' by Godhead are of the nature of His Special Favour. This becomes self-evident, as soon as they are understood as proceeding directly from the Will of the Lord. In the cases we are considering just now, this latter condition was supplied automatically by the fact that the mischievous Acts of the Child were actually *liked* by those persons against whom they were committed by the Lord Himself and were liked because of their connection with the Lord. If we love a frail mortal child, the imperfections of the object of our passion prevent the sentiment from acquiring the permanence that is its due and without which its full requirement is not satisfied. Hence the love of average worldly people for their children is unsure and shallow and cannot, by the very nature of its imperfection, extend to other children or even to all acts of one's own child. If one sets himself deliberately to love all little children without reservation, he will be rightly charged with trying to do something that is unnatural and fictitious. Such affection has no real basis to stand upon. We want to love our children from a natural impulse which is balked of its satisfaction by the unworthiness of the object to which it is directed. There was no cause of any such disappointment in the case of their love for Sree Gaurasundar, as He is, indeed, Godhead Himself. Hence, says the *Bhāgaratam*, 'all the faculties really succeed in obtaining what they seek only when they are directed towards Godhead.' This overwhelming attractiveness also supplies an indirect proof of the Perfect Personality of the Supreme Lord.

An incident of these Infant days is thus recorded by Krishna-dās Kavirāj Gosvāmī. One day Sachi brought a vessel full of fried rice and sweetmeats and gave it to Nimāi, asking Him to sit down and eat the same. Sachi then left Him to attend to household work. The Boy, however, began to eat raw earth by avoiding any notice. Sachi, however, perceived this and came running to the Child with expostulations of disapproval, snatched the earth from the Boy and asked Him why He preferred it to the other eatables. The Child burst into tears. 'Why are you angry?' He said, 'How am I to blame? It is you who gave Me the earth to eat. Fried rice, sweetmeats, cooked rice, etc., are all transforma-

tions of earth. This, which I am eating, is earth; those are also earth. Why do you consider them to be different? This body is of earth; its food is also earth. Consider this well. I am helpless, if you blame without reflection?" Sachi was very much surprised in her heart at such reply. 'Who taught you,' she said, 'to eat earth by the barren policy of intellectualists? The body is nourished only by eating cooked rice which is a transformation of earth. If raw earth is eaten, disease is produced and the body is destroyed thereby. We fetch water in a pitcher which is a transformation of earth. If we put water on a lump of clay, it soaks and dries up.' The Child said, 'Why did you not tell Me this before? I shall no more eat earth now that I know. When I feel hungry, I shall suck your breast.' And, saying this, the Boy smiled and climbed to the lap of mother and began to suck. These revelations of Supreme Power were constant and various. They were secured against recognition by the display of childishness that followed and served to blind everybody's judgment.

Sree Sachi Devi did not evidently belong to the school of empiric abstractionists who deny Godhead the power of real manifestation and real creation, regarding the latter as temporary, unwholesome and illusive and, therefore, impossible of being in any way related to perfect Godhead. Sachi Devi, on the contrary, believed in the relationship of simultaneous unity and diversity of Power with Possessor of Power and was not prepared to ignore qualitative differences that really exist between the fried rice and raw earth, after the manner of the Buddhists or believers in the Undifferentiated Abstract Negation as *Brahman*. Child Nimai was more easily converted to the creed of His mother by her effective protest than falls to the lot of the average Mayavadin.

One day as the Child was roaming in the town as usual by Himself and with ornaments on all parts of His Body, He attracted the attention of two thieves who thought on a plan of robbing His ornaments. Accordingly, one of them with sweet words took up the Lord into his arms, saying that they had been searching for Him and would take Him home. The Lord at once consented to their proposal and was carried on their shoulders a long distance through intricate lanes towards the place where the nefarious deed

was to be perpetrated with safety and secrecy. Those thieves endeavoured all this time to keep Nimāi in humour by sweet words and the offer of prospective sweetmeats. While the Lord was being thus hurried off to their rendezvous, the members of His family missed Him and began to search in all directions, but could find the Boy nowhere. A great fear gradually took possession of their minds. Meanwhile the thieves had been led by the Deluding Power of Vishnu into taking the road to the Home of Jagannāth Misra, under the impression that it led to their own place and, on their arrival at Misra's house, felt quite sure that they had successfully reached their destination.

They accordingly made the Boy descend from their shoulders just where Jagannāth Misra and the friends and relations of the family were sitting in silent grief, apprehending a great calamity. Nimāi at once ran into the arms of His father and all present shouted 'Hari, Hari' in the joy of a great relief, as if Life Himself was restored to their bodies. The thieves looked foolish and perplexed and were very much frightened when they found out that it was not their own place. Thereupon availing of the confusion caused by the arrival of Nimāi they made good their escape.

They did not stop till they felt that they were out of the reach of any possible pursuers. They were amazed by the nature of their adventure and thought that they had been under the spell of a black magician and had been saved only by the grace of goddess Chandi whom they worshipped. They hugged each other in a close embrace in their ecstasy of joy at their Providential escape. As a matter of fact, it was also no ordinary good luck that had provided them an opportunity of carrying Nimāi on their shoulders.

Here, at the house of Jagannāth Misra, after the first outburst of joy had subsided, they began to look about for the person who had brought Nimāi home with the object of rewarding him by the present of a head-dress. This was a piece of cloth which they wanted to tie round his head with their own hands. But although it transpired that two men had actually brought the Child on their shoulders, no one came forward to claim the reward. Nimāi was questioned and declared that He had gone to the bank of the *Bhāgirathi* and had been brought on the shoulders of two

strangers by paths that were unknown to Him. The people arrived at the conclusion that it was an instance of what the Scriptures declare, *viz.*, that children, old men and those who have nobody to look after them, are protected by the gods in the shape of luck. Thus thought they in their ignorance, unable to realize the significance of the occurrence by reason of the sportive intervention of the Power of Vishnu. Those, concludes Thākur Brindābandās, who listen to this story, which is one of the *hidden* narratives of the Scriptures, attain to firm devotion to the Feet of Sree Chaitanya.

Vishnu's Power possesses at one and the same time a double face. One of these confers the knowledge of the Divinity on one disposed to serve, the other obscures the spiritual vision and makes the *jīva*, who is averse to the service of Godhead, hanker for sensuous enjoyment. The *jīva* falls into the clutches of the latter, also called *Māyā*, if he makes the attempt to understand the Divinity by the resources of his own paltry intellect. In this instance the theives were prevented by the Spiritual Energy to act in the wrong way, in spite of their bad intentions. The members of the family of Jagannāth Misra were also prevented by the Spiritual Power, who supplies the conjunction of events forming the *Leelā* of Godhead, from realising the whole truth of the incident. The *jīva* possesses freedom of will but is lacking in the power of taking the effective initiative which belongs exclusively to Godhead. The *jīvas* are made conscious of the Purpose of Godhead in what they are enabled to do, just in the proportion that is necessary for the Divine Purpose. Those, who rely on their own judgment for finding out the Divine Purpose, without desiring to receive the knowledge of it from Himself, are guided by the Deluding Energy into wrong conclusions; but they are not themselves aware that their conclusions are wrong.

This is, however, really opaque delusion. Those, who submit to receive their enlightenment from Godhead, are not thus deprived of the service of Godhead by the Deluding Power. In this instance it is not the Deluding Energy but the preventing Spiritual Power that relieved the thieves from their thievish propensity and sowed the seed for future service of the Divinity. Herein the thieves

were really most fortunate. It could not be otherwise, as Godhead Himself is directly concerned. When thieves steal the property of worldly people, they are under the deluding Power who punishes those who desire to serve themselves instead of God by helping them to gain their object in the shape of the attainment of their selfish enjoyment. But stealth, which is contrived by the Spiritual Power to be directed apparently against God Himself for enhancing the charm of the Divine *Leelā*, produces the best results in spite of the apparently evil intention of the person who attempts to rob Him, if the thief is not really anxious to go *consciously* against Godhead. In the case even of demon Rāvana, who apparently succeeded in robbing Sītā Devi, the illusion of his apparent success operated for his benefit by his death at the Hands of Godhead Himself.

From these instances we should be careful, however, not to draw the wrong conclusion and suppose that Godhead is apt to reward those who cherish evil intentions towards Himself for such offensive conduct. God rewards everybody impartially and fully. But the reward takes different forms according to the different antecedents of the recipients. In the case of the thieves, the stealth of God's property was prevented; but of this they were not conscious and God was also served unconsciously by allowing Himself to be carried on their shoulders to His Own Home. In the case of Rāvana, he was deluded by the Spiritual Power into the belief that he was successful in stealing Sītā. He, however, stole only the delusive form of Sītā. This proved a means of correction for Rāvana, although he had planned his *offence* against good advice. He was punished by the Spiritual Power by the salughter of himself with all his kindred and followers. Rāvana was well aware that he was going against Godhead. He was more fortunate than the two thieves, because he was enabled to realise that he was punished for his offence and also the utter wickedness of opposing the Divine Will. The Power of Godhead is really One but acts consistently in opposite ways, accordingly as He is served or opposed. Her external face, which alone is open to the view of those who are opposed to Godhead, seems to be terrible and 'incalculable as long as they continue to be averse to God. Her

benign face is seen only by those who are disposed to serve Godhead. The delusion of Jagannāth Misra and his kindred and friends was absolutely wholesome, being of the nature of the benign operation of the Spiritual Power of Godhead in furtherance of the joy of His Divine Activities.

One day Jagannāth Misra called to his Son and asked Him to fetch his book from the inner apartment. As the Boy entered the room running, Misra and Sachi distinctly heard exquisitely sweet sounds as of jingling of bells of anklets that were produced by the quick movements of the Child. Presently Nīmāi came out with the required book and, making it over to His father, ran off for play. The parents were very much perplexed. There were no jingling anklets on the Feet of their Boy. Whence could the sound come? Their astonishment was changed to conviction as they went into the room. There they found, all over the room, prints of Feet marked with the signs of the banner, the bolt and the goad. They at once recognised the Foot-prints of Vishnu, and both of them instinctively exclaimed that there would be no more birth for them as they had a sight of those well-known Wonderful Divine Feet never seen by them before. They reverentially bowed to the foot-prints of Godhead. Misra naturally enough concluded that it was the Act of Dāmodar Silā, i.e., the *Sālagram Silā* Who was the tutelary Deity of the family and was regularly worshipped in the house. He thought that Gopāla (Cow-boy Krishna) Who dwelt in the *Sālagrām Silā* walked about in the room, and the prints were of the Feet of Gopāla. Misra decided to undertake personally the worship of *Dāmodar Silā* from that day and asked Sachi Devi to cook rice boiled in sweet milk mixed with ghee as a special offering to Dāmodar Silā next morning. Misra with his own hands bathed the *Sālagrām Silā* with the five holy products of the cow and, in the company of his pious consort, reverentially worshipped the Deity of the family. The Lord laughed in His Mind at the conduct of His parents.

Thereafter occurred a most wonderful event. A pilgrim Brāhmaṇa, who had done many pious deeds in his previous lives, was wont to wander all over the country in quest of Krishna. He worshipped the six-letter *mantram* of Gopāla (Cow-boy

Krishna) and ate nothing except such food as had already been offered to Gopāla. By good fortune it so chanced that he arrived at the Lord's House in course of his wanderings. The pilgrim Brāhmaṇa wore, as his cherished ornaments, the Holy Forms of Gopāla and the *Sālagrām Silā* suspended from his neck. The whole person of the pilgrim was aglow with the spiritual radiance of the ideal Brāhmaṇa which can never be properly described in words. The mouth of the Brāhmaṇa constantly recited the Name of Krishna. His eyes were listless by the influence of the sweet quality of Govinda That possessed his heart. At the sight of the newly-arrived stranger-guest, Jagannāth Misra, struck by the visible force of his personality, rising from his seat with respect, made obeisance to him. Misra then welcomed his guest with all due formality. He himself washed the feet of his guest and offered him his best seat. After the pilgrim was refreshed and properly seated, the good Misra enquired the place of his residence. To this the Brāhmaṇa replied that he was a recluse and wandered about through sheer restlessness of mind. Misra, bowing low, observed that the wanderings of such as he testified to the good fortune of the world which good fortune belonged to him that day, and, if commanded, he would make the necessary arrangements for his cooking of the meal for Krishna.

The Brāhmaṇa, signifying his assent to the proposal of Misra, the latter with great pleasure proceeded to make all necessary preparations. He made ready the place of cooking by cleansing it with great care and brought thither all the articles required for cooking. The Brāhmaṇa, having cooked the meal with great satisfaction, sat down to make its offering to Krishna.

No sooner did the Brāhmaṇa engage in the meditation of Krishna, than Sree Gaur-sundar appeared before him. The Body of the Child was full of dust and perfectly nude. His beautiful Eyes, Hands, and Feet were red. Smilingly He took up the food offered by the Brāhmaṇa with His beautiful Hand and, in the view of the worthy Brāhmaṇa, ate a mouthful. The fortunate Bipra shrieked in an agony of grief: 'That restless Boy has stolen my cooked rice.' His cry quickly brought Jagannāth Misra

to the spot who found Sree Gaursundar in the very Act of eating the cooked rice with a smiling Countenance.

Misra was greatly enraged and ran to administer his Son a sound thrashing. The pilgrim Brāhmaṇa got up in great fear and caught hold of the hand of Misra. He said that the Child had no knowledge of right and wrong. A wise man should never hurt such a one. He accordingly importuned Misra to do no violence to the Boy. Misra was very much dejected. The Brāhmaṇa said that there was no cause for grief; Godhead alone knows what is to happen on any day. 'I would dine on any fruits, roots or such other food that may be in the house. Be pleased to give the same to me.' But Misra would not hear. 'If you indeed regard me as your servant,' he said, 'be pleased to cook the meal once again. Allow me to make ready the place. I have got everything necessary for your cooking in the house. I shall, indeed, be very glad, if you cook once more.' Other relatives and well-wishers of Misra joined in the entreaty. The importunity of so many persons had its effect and induced the pilgrim to agree to cook again.

This time, in order to keep the Child out of harm's way, Sachi Devi took Him to a neighbour's house. The ladies did not forego such an excellent opportunity of reading a good lesson to the Child. 'Well, Nimbā', they said, 'You are so foolish that you ate the rice that was cooked by a stranger. You will be an outcast for this. What will you do now?' The Boy laughed and made this strange answer, 'I am a cow-boy. I eat the rice cooked by Brāhmaṇas at all time.' He looked at them with an arch smile. The reply had its effect. They all burst into uproarious laughter and pressed the Child to their bosom. The Benign Spiritual Power of God prevented them from understanding the actual meaning of His words.

That pilgrim Brāhmaṇa after cooking a second time sat down to make the offering to Krishna. He meditated on the Cow-boy. Nimbā again appeared before the pilgrim, having eluded the vigilance of all watchers, and ate a handful of the cooked rice which was duly perceived only by the Brāhmaṇa who at once shouted out with grief. This gave the alarm to Misra who detected the Boy as He ran away after eating the rice. Misra took up a stick and

gave chase. But the Boy took refuge inside one of the rooms in great fear. Misra was not to be pacified by the entreaties of anybody. The pilgrim Brāhmaṇa himself again interposed. 'Krishna', he said, 'has not allotted cooked rice for me to-day. This is the real truth, I tell you. The Boy is not to blame at all.' This did not allay the poignant grief of Misra who remained silent and thoughtful.

At this point Viswarup appeared on the scene. The beauty of His person was only equalled by His knowledge of all the Scriptures and His unbounded devotion to Krishna. The very sight of Viswarup was a revelation to the pilgrim who regarded His appearance with great attention and frequently looked at Him with unconcealed admiration. He enquired His parentage and warmly congratulated Misra on the possession of such a son.

Viswarup made obeisance to the Brāhmaṇa. His words were extraordinarily sweet. He said that it was, indeed, very great good fortune that had brought a person who finds all his delight in his own soul as guest to their house. There could be no greater calamity than if this guest had to fast in the house against His will. He felt it a great grief, although He was very glad by seeing him. The Brāhmaṇa said that he lived in the forest and was habituated to a diet of roots and fruits. He felt amply rewarded by having the sight of Viswarup. He would take any article of food that had been offered to Krishna. Viswarup said that a person like the pilgrim Brāhmaṇa naturally cared only for the happiness of others, in preference to his own. Viswarup was, therefore, emboldened to make the request that he would be pleased to cook a third time. The Brāhmaṇa said that the Will of Krishna in the matter was supreme and it had been very clearly declared. It was also almost midnight. He had already cooked twice. As it was not clearly the Will of Krishna that he should eat cooked rice that day, he entreated to be excused any further useless exertion and would accept fruits and roots as his repast for that night.

But Viswarup fell at the feet of the Brāhmaṇa and repeated the entreaty of Himself and of the whole family that he would cook once again for the sake of Krishna. The pilgrim had been thoroughly bewitched by the Beauty and Grace of Viswarup. He

willingly consented to cook a third time amidst the shouts of 'Hari, Hari' that were raised by all present. The place was quickly cleansed and everything was made ready for his cooking.

This time very special care was taken to prevent further mischief by Nîmâi. He had already hidden Himself inside one of the rooms. On the advice of those present, Misra had the door of the room securely bound from outside. Misra himself guarded the entrance of the room. The ladies at last announced that there was no further cause for anxiety, as the Child had fallen asleep. But they did not relax their vigilance.

At last the cooking of the Brâhmaṇa was finished, and, having arranged the meal, that Brâhmaṇa of excellent deeds, offered the same to Krishna in meditation. All the people had by this time fallen into a deep slumber. The Son of Sachî Devî again appeared on the spot where the Brâhmaṇa was making his offering of food to Gopâla. On catching sight of the Boy the Brâhmaṇa made a great noise, but no one heard his cries. The Lord said, 'Bipra! You are so generous! You ask Me to come. Is it My fault? Repeating My *mantram* you call upon Me. Finding it impossible to stay away, I have thus come to you. You always long for My Sight. Wherefore, I show Myself to you.'

The Brâhmaṇa forthwith had a vision of the Wonderful Divine Form. The Figure had eight Arms which held the Conch, Disc, Club and the Lotus. There was butter in one of His Hands, which He ate with another. And the Lord played on the *Murali* (flute) with the other two Hands. A garland of jewels and the Gem *Kaustûra* adorned His Breast which was marked with footprints of Bhrigu. The Brâhmaṇa saw that precious ornaments decorated all parts of His Body. The tail of the peacock, set in the fresh twigs of *gunjâ*, adorned His Head. His red Lips added to the Beauty of His moonlike Face. He moved His Lotus Eyes smiling. The *Vaijayanti* Garland waved to and fro as also the *Makara* pendent hanging from His Ears. The charming Anklet (*Nupura*) of jewels adorned the Lotus Feet of the Lord. Darkness was flung back afar by the sheen of His gemlike Toe-nails. On the self-same spot the Brâhmaṇa also saw the wonderful *Kadamba* tree in Brindâbana, alive with the sounds of birds. He saw the

cowherds and milkmaids and cows on all sides. He had direct vision of everything on which he was wont to meditate. That Brāhmaṇa of pious deeds swooned away with excess of joy on beholding splendours never seen before.

Sree Gaurasundar touched the body of the Brāhmaṇa with His Hand. The Touch of Divine Hand restored external consciousness to the Brāhmaṇa. He was rendered passive by joy, and no words came out of his mouth. He swooned away and fell on the ground repeatedly, but, recovering quickly, stood up as often as he fell. No part of his body could be composed by reason of shivering, sweat, horripilation; and tears from his eyes flowed in a stream like the sacred current of the Ganges. Presently the Brāhmaṇa clasped the Feet of the Lord and began to cry with a loud voice.

On beholding the restlessness of the Brāhmaṇa, Sree Gaurasundar smiled as He spoke to him briefly. The Lord said 'that the Brāhmaṇa is His servant in every birth and always thinks of having the Sight of Him. Wherefore He had shown him His Form. He had formerly shown His same Form to the Brāhmaṇa in the home of Nanda, in another birth. The Brāhmaṇa had forgot it. On that previous occasion also when Sree Gaurāṅga had been born in the village of the cowherds, the same Brāhmaṇa, pursuing his pilgrim-journeys as now, had accidentally become the guest in the home of Nanda, and the Lord then showed him the same Form by stealthily eating his cooked food while in the act of offering it to Krishna. Those, who are His servants like the Brāhmaṇa, are privileged to have the Sight of His Divine Form. He then told the Brāhmaṇa not to divulge those secrets to any one as long as He remained Manifest in this world. He also told the Brāhmaṇa that His Advent takes place at the beginning of the congregational chanting (*samkirtan*) and that He will spread the *samkirtan* to all countries. He will give away to every household the Holy Love which is coveted by the gods including Brahmā. The Brāhmaṇa will live to see many of those Activities.' With these words and assuring the Brāhmaṇa not to have any fears, the Lord returned to His own apartment, and there lay in His little bed as before, in the likeness of a child. By reason of deep slumber no one could know anything. .

The Brāhmaṇa was filled with supreme bliss on beholding the wonderful Divine manifestation. He besmeared his body with the cooked rice, cried as he ate, danced, sang, laughed and roared with delight. He repeatedly ejaculated 'jais' to the Boy-Krishna (*Gopāla*). The noise made by the Brāhmaṇa at last woke up everybody, when he restrained himself and finished his meal by the customary performance (*āchaman*).

The first impulse of the Brāhmaṇa was to make a clean breast of everything to all the people, so that they might be delivered by recognising the Lord Whom they all believed to be but a mere mortal child. But he desisted from this rashness on remembering his promise made to the Lord not to divulge anything. This fortunate Brāhmaṇa thereupon took up his permanent abode in Nabadwip and daily visited his cherished Divinity at the home of Jagannāth Misra on the conclusion of his day's begging.

The Beatific Vision is different from ordinary seeing. The Brāhmaṇa thought that if only he proclaimed what he had actually seen to all the people, they would implicitly believe in his words and be saved by knowing the Infant Son of Jagannāth Misra as the Lord of the world. This had been forbidden by Sree Gaur-sundar Himself in anticipation. Why did He forbid such disclosure? The Lord had Himself told the Brāhmaṇa that His servants alone are privileged to have the Sight of the Divine Form. Those who are not the servants of Krishna do not see Him. Knowing Him is identical with seeing Him. Those that are not willing to serve Krishna see only a mortal child in the Son of Jagannāth Misra. This hallucination can be removed only by the Lord Himself, because it is His Power that obscures their vision. Unless He allows them to see, they cannot see or know Him as He really is. But the Lord is not unkind to them. He is full of mercy for even those who do not want to serve Him. He does not show Himself to them, lest they are forced to serve Him through fear. He wants their willing service which alone can satisfy also themselves, because that is the really natural relationship between Krishna and *jivas*.

This freedom of will conferred by Krishna on *jivas*, which, therefore, forms a part and parcel of their nature, is allowed free

scope by the Lord in order to enable *jivas* to attain the eternal, natural function of their souls by the process of free rational choice. He does not compel their choice to serve even Himself, against their freedom of will. But the *jiva* cannot sit idly. He must always serve to exist at all. Those, who do not like to serve Krishna, have to be made to serve their own deluded fancies. They hope to be able to avoid the service of Krishna by following their own selfish inclinations. Krishna freely allows them to make this experiment by providing the means for the *seeming* realisation of their desire.

His Deluding Energy creates this world for the purpose by His Will. Those *jivas*, who are averse to serve Krishna, find this world to contain more than an endless abundance of what they can conceivably want in such circumstance, *viz.*, all varieties of means of their own selfish enjoyment. In the process of undergoing such enjoyment, they have nothing to do with Krishna as the only Master to be served. They are thus offered, in fulfilment of their own choice, the vision of that Potency of Krishna whose apparent function is to minister to their selfish pleasures. This is the deluding manifestation or non-Krishna which can alone be available to those who want to lord it over the Divinity.

The Potency of Krishna, who thus appears to serve the erring fancies of disloyal souls, is the Deluding Power or *Māyā*. When Krishna Himself comes down in His own proper Form into this world which is built for the above penal purpose by His Deluding Power, those *jivas*, who happen to be undergoing corrective enjoyment in this lower region, naturally take Him to be an object of this world like the other mundane entities that they know, which are of value to them solely because they minister to their trivial selfish enjoyment. All so-called *service*, that is so loudly advertised in this world, is only a method of procuring the good, *i.e.*, enjoyable things of this world for oneself and other ungodly persons, for pleasing oneself. There is *no* place for the service of Krishna in the scheme of the selfish people of this world. The service of Krishna, the only Master, is not desired at all in this world. We want to be ourselves masters of everything including Krishna Himself if possible. Our lip-homage to Krishna is only a

piece of pious hypocrisy. God does not perpetrate the anomaly of offering us a Master, Who can be no other than Himself, when we want to be served. This aversion is not due to ignorance, but is an innate disposition which is the result of the abuse of our freedom of will. It is only when the will of the *jiva* chooses to serve the Truth, i.e., Krishna, that Krishna shows His Form to him in order to receive his offered service.

The Vision Beatific is, therefore, possible only for those who have attained the highest rung of the ladder of spiritual endeavour towards the unadulterated service of the Divinity. There are hypocritical visions of so-called Divinity which are an ordinary device of the pseudo-yogis for deluding those worldly people who desire to see (?) Krishna for the gratification of their senses.

These *pseudo-vision*s and *miracles* are by no means any infringement of the law of physical Nature. They come under the law of physical Nature or Deluding Energy as much as the ordinary events of mundane life. They are events of the mental plane. These mental powers can be obtained by the processes of *pseudo-yoga* and are coveted by persons who are inordinately anxious to extend their scope of selfish enjoyment. These bad people naturally fall a victim to the *pervert yogis* who lead them to deeper depths of perdition by producing in their minds such impious hallucinations of mastery over the Divinity. Krishna has His Eternal Divine Form. But His Form is not like those images of God that are set up in the shrines of worldlings for the gratification of fallen *jivas*. The True Form of Krishna is All-pure and Spiritual and can, by His Nature, be seen only by those who are themselves free from all worldly taint. This caution of the Scriptures should serve as a much-needed warning to all educated and high-born people who are specially liable to accept the assurances of pseudo-yogis and pseudo-sādhus to be enabled to obtain the Sight (?) of the Divinity even in their sinful state.

The process of spiritual progress has its strict gradations which bear a close analogy to those of mental progress. The really moral state is the natural condition of the *jiva*. An immoral or non-moral person is far worse than a brute. This moral condition is the highest ideal of his position conceivable by man as

attainable by his empiric thinking and activities based thereon. The spiritual, indeed, transcends the *ideal* moral, but not in the sense that it transgresses against the so-called moral law, because by such transgression man is only degraded to the condition which is worse than even that of the brute. The spiritual life enables us to realise the moral as a secondary result. The spiritual *fulfils* the moral ideal by transcending it.

Morality can neither be understood nor perfected in practice by the empiric efforts of man. Its ideal is attainment of *perfect* purity (?) of body and mind. This ideal, the Scriptures tell us, can be automatically attained, only if it is made a secondary, and not the primary, object of life, as it happens to be the case with all really immoral people. The perfection of morality is realised as a secondary consequence of serving Krishna and not as a reward of endeavours for the satisfaction of our senses in our temporary worldly sojourn.

Those who serve Krishna are alone necessarily and perfectly moral or free from the evils of the flesh. Those, who are not *perfectly* moral in this real sense, are not spiritual *at all* and have no right of entry into Sree Brindāvana, the Transcendental Abode of the Divinity. But the Deluding Power of God misleads immoral people, through the agency of immoral *yogis*, by showing them a false form resembling that of Godhead, as a means of punishing them for such impious desire of making God an object of the gratification of their senses.

This punishment is a real mercy to such people and is intended to cure them of their rank atheism. It is, therefore, necessary to confront one's so-called spiritual experiences with the authority of the Scriptures and the corroboration of real *sādhus* who do not desire to aggrandise themselves at our expense, before they are admitted by our serving disposition as genuine. The unambiguous advice on such matters is obtainable only from Sreemad *Bhāgavatam* and in the only intelligible form from the career of Sree Chaitanya as described by His associates, Who is the Living Embodiment of the Eternal Religion described in the *Bhāgavatam*. The other Scriptures avoid the concrete presentation of the Truth,

lest He be condemned or disbelieved by those who are deliberately *averse* to Him.

The *rationale* of theism is furnished by the Vaishnava philosophy, which is unique in the world, in its positive aspect. The associates and loyal followers of Sree Chaitanya have left an ample exposition of the philosophy of the religion of the *Bhāgavata* in the clearest possible language. But even so it is suicidal to attempt to understand the highest spiritual principles without availing ourselves of the aid that has been so mercifully placed within our reach by Godhead Himself. The attitude of neglect of the transcendental subject is often due to ignorance, prejudice and irreverence. The two former obstacles can be overcome only by one's own endeavours; but the last is incurable except by Grace. There cannot well be a greater hypocrite than one who professes the desire of serving Krishna but has no absolute regard for those perfectly loyal souls who admit no other legitimate function except the service of Godhead. It is for this sufficient reason that Godhead Himself has ordained that by submitting to His devotees, not once nor twice but constantly and eternally with body, mind and speech, that any one can have real access to His Presence. It is, however, this very dictum of the Scriptures, intended for ensuring devotion to Godhead, that is exploited by the knaves and atheists under the external garb of *sādhus* for passing off the different forms of pseudo-service on willing worldly people for the gratification of their diabolical atheistical purposes which are destructive of even ordinary morality.

CHAPTER VI.

GROWING BOY

THE Lord occupied Himself with these Juvenile Pastimes after the manner of Gopāla (Cow-Boy Krishna). Meanwhile the proper time for the performance of the ceremony of making the Boy begin His studies, having arrived, Jagannāth Misra chose an auspicious day and moment for '*putting the writing-chalk into the Hands of his Boy*' to initiate Him into the art of reading, writing and 'rithmetic. This is one of the ten purificatory ceremonies enjoined by the Scriptures as necessary to be observed by the Brāhmaṇas.

Some time after the ceremony, all friends of the family gathered together to perform the next purificatory rites, *viz.*, perforation of the ears and tonsure. The perforation of the ears is to make possible hearing of the Word of Godhead or the attainment of the fitness of listening to words regarding the highest good, as distinct from ordinary non-spiritual utterances. The making of the tuft known as '*the tongue of fire*' in the Vedas or subsequently as '*teaching of Sree Chaitanya*' (*Sree Chaitanya-sikshā*), is another of the ten lustrations. Māyāvādins (illusionist-Monists), who believe in non-activity, admit the value of the tuft only in the sphere of work which is illusory and, accordingly, in the long run, shave off the tuft on renouncing all activity. But the Vedic theistic renunciation of the *triple staff* (*tridanda*) does not dispense with the tuft which, in this case, is emblematic of progress in the sphere of the service of Godhead, even in the stage of *sannyāsa*.

Sree Chaitanya read all the letters of the Alphabet at the first sight, to the amazement of everybody. He finished all the compound-letters in two or three days and began to write con-

stantly the series of the Names of Krishna. He wrote and read aloud, night and day, with the greatest ardour, the Holy Names of Rāma, Krishna, Murāri, Mukunda, Vanamāli, etc. The fortunate people of Nadia actually saw the Lord of Vaikuntha reading in the company of their children. The sweetness with which the Lord articulates the letters has power to steal the hearts of all *jivas*, if they have only a chance of listening to Him.

Sree Gaurasundar engaged in diverse kinds of strange frolics, and His demands were always most difficult to satisfy. He would ask to have the bird which flew across the sky and the moon and stars of the firmament, and would cry violently, rolling in the dust and dashing His hands and legs against the ground, if His wishes were not fulfilled. All present would take Him up into their arms to console Him, but Viswambhar always proved intractable and went on crying, 'I must have it'. There was only one sovereign remedy to stop Him. He was hushed the moment He heard the Name of Hari. All of them recited aloud the Name of Hari by clap of hand. This at once quieted the Child Who forgot all His turbulence. They chanted the Name of Hari to please the Boy and the home of Jagannāth was turned into the realm of Vaikuntha.

It is necessary to guard against a possible error. That which is not the Abode of Godhead should not be supposed to be *convertible* into the same by chanting the Name of Hari. Such speculation, theologically dubbed as 'transubstantiation,' applies only to mental and physical phenomena. The non-spiritual is never turned into the spiritual. Godhead dwells eternally in the pure spiritual essence which is the manifestation of His Spiritual Power, eternally distinct from the play of His Deluding Energy. The home of Jagannāth Misra, in which the Lord appears, is never within the jurisdiction of the Deluding Power of Godhead.

One day Nimāi began to cry violently. The Child was not quieted even by the chant of the Name of Hari, but kept on crying. After every method of consoling the Boy had failed, they implored Him to tell them the cause of His grief, promising to procure whatever He desired. The Lord replied that He was very ill and lacked the strength to move or be quiet. If they really wanted to

save His life, they must hasten to the house of two Brāhmaṇas, Jagadish Pandit and Hiranya Pandit. Those two had prepared a great variety of offerings for Vishnu on that day, which was the *ekādasi tithi* or the Lord's Day. If they could get from them all those offerings and give them to Him, He would be cured of His ailment by feeding on those things.

The mother was shocked to hear, thinking it was opposed to custom and the Scriptures for any one to desire to eat offerings intended for Vishnu and that also on the *ekādasi* day. But the others only burst into merry laughter at these words of the Child and assured Him that they would send for the offerings immediately, so He need have no anxiety on that account any more.

Jagannāth Misra himself went down to the house of those two Brāhmaṇas who happened to be his most intimate friends. He told them what the Boy so imperatively wanted. Those two Brāhmaṇas were struck with a sudden wonder on hearing the strange proposal. They thought within themselves, 'This is most wonderful for a little Boy. How could He know at all that this is the Day of Sree Hari? How could He know that we have prepared to-day a great variety of offerings? This makes it perfectly clear to us that Gopāla (Cow-boy Krishna) Himself dwells in the Figure of this beautiful Boy. Nārāyaṇa Himself sports in the Frame of this Child. May be it is He Who makes Him say these words from His seat in the heart of the Child.' Thinking in this way those two Brāhmaṇas were filled with supreme joy, and at once with the greatest pleasure they brought out all their offerings intended for Vishnu and themselves conveyed them to the Home of Jagannāth Misra. They offered them with the greatest delight to Nimāi and pressed Him to eat everything, giving out that all their preparations were at last really offered to Krishna Himself. The Lord was very much pleased on receiving the offerings and tasted a little of everything. His distemper was completely healed. He became as naughty and restless as ever, scattering the eatables in all directions and throwing bits of them at those who stood in a circle round Him and chanted the Name of Hari as He danced in the midst of the *samkirtan* of Himself.

It is the custom of the Vaishnavas not to eat anything on the day of *ekādasi*. This does not apply to the Lord Himself to Whom accordingly the usual offerings of food are made on the *ekādasi* day also. Those Brāhmaṇas must have offered the food to Nīmāi in the firm belief that the Boy was no other than Krishna for Whom the offerings had been prepared. Such instinctive good sense, observes Thākur Brindābandās in this connection, is only possible to one who obtains the special mercy of Krishna. Devotion to the Lord does not make her appearance in the heart as long as the worldly egotistic attitude persists. One, who gives up all reliance upon his own powers and humbly seeks enlightenment from Krishna Himself, or, in other words, becomes His willing servant, obtains the mercy of Krishna in the shape of devotion to the Feet of the Lord. To the worldly egotist all this is utterly incomprehensible. The sudden resolve of the Brāhmaṇas to offer the eatables to Nīmāi, instinctively believing Him to be Vishnu Himself for Whom they had been prepared, is a circumstance which cannot be properly grasped by any one except the servants of Krishna.

The reader may be reminded of the fact already noted that when the Lord appears in this world, He comes down with His eternal Associates, Servitors and Paraphernalia. This Descent of the Lord serves His merciful purpose of bringing the Divine realm within the vision of fallen souls thereby affording them the opportunity of serving Himself. The narrative of such Activities preserved in the language of this world continues to provide the same opportunity for all succeeding generations. But the Abode, Associates, Servitors, Paraphernalia, Narratives, although They appear to us like the things of this earth, are really spiritual entities, being of the Divine Essence. The Lord ever sports with His Own. He is ever manifest in the pure spiritual essence and all His Activities take place on the plane of the pure soul. His Activities manifesting Themselves in this world also possess the same spiritual nature. The Lord in His Real, Positive or Spiritual Nature is knowable and servable by pure souls alone.

This material world is the shadow of the spiritual world. If the soul seeks the Lord in this world, he is perpetually deluded

and is forced to arrive at the conclusion sooner or later, if he is really sincere in his quest of the Truth, that He is not to be found in this world. Less sincere people think that they can find Him in this world. But when the Lord actually appears in this world, these insincere people either ignore Him, thinking that He is an ordinary mortal, or, even if they are told of His Divinity, miss the real view of Him believing Him to be Godhead in the guise of a mortal and subject to the imperfections of the flesh, as by such process of 'incarnation' alone He is wrongly imagined to be able to make Himself visible to the fettered souls.

The first is the frankly sceptical attitude that ignores altogether all possibility of spiritual existence. The second is no less fatal. It supposes that Godhead may be subject to the bondage of *Māyā*, that Godhead may appear in this world as an actually sinful person and may engage in all worldly activities in the same way as we do. That such sinful activities of Godhead are *not* sinful, that it is the *duty* of fallen souls to *submit* to these *sinful* pastimes of the Lord *in his human form*; and that by *such* submission *alone* they can attain to the highest object of life. This is *psilanthropism*, or the doctrine of *prākṛita sahajīā* sects, which is responsible, in some form or other, for all the corruptions of all current spurious creeds that profess to be *theistic*.

The true view is that the Lord, even when He chooses to be visible to the mortal eye, is nothing less than the Lord in His Fullness, because He is always All-powerful, always All-pure, always All-knowledge. Those *alone* can join in His Activities who *share* His Nature Who is Spiritual and incapable of corruption. That is to say, no sinful person can really see, understand or participate in His Activities. The soul that is averse to Godhead, if by dint of the awakened sincerity of his nature he is convinced that no connection with the Lord can be established so long as the sinful condition itself persists, is enabled to obtain deliverance from the bondage of this world by witnessing with faith, by studying with faith and by listening with faith to the Narratives of these Activities from the lips of the servants of the Lord, by serving with faith those from whom he receives the tidings. The Lord, His Associates and servitors, His Abode, the Narrative of

His Activities, although they choose to be visible in this world from time to time, have *nothing* in common with *anything* of this world and are incapable of receiving the least stain of worldliness by their *descent* into this world.

Those who think otherwise are utterly misguided and are profane atheists, as they imagine that the Lord is only a created being like their false selves and possessing a similar liability to mundane defects and merits. But the Scriptures say that there is no greater slander of the All-pervasive (*Vishnu*) than to affect to believe that the Body of Vishnu is material. If this point is properly understood, there would be no chance of impostors, full of all the worst vices of humanity, setting up as 'Incarnations' (?) of Godhead and by their sinful activities and spurious performances bringing about the terrible ruin of themselves and their unfortunate Victims.

Lord Vishwambhar continued to be exceedingly restless and wayward. He became the leader of all the turbulent Brāhmaṇa boys of the neighbourhood. He and His company were constantly after some mischief or other and engaged in a campaign of regular raids on different places. No one could check His turbulence. He would cut jokes at other children, whenever He chanced to meet them. They would also retort, till the affair developed into a regular fray. The boys of the Lord's party were always victorious in these quarrels by reason of the superior strength of the Lord, and their opponents found themselves compelled to retire discomfited. At this period Sree Gaursundar had the most charming Appearance. He was always gray with dust and His Body was beautifully adorned with points of writing ink.

After study was over at midday, Sree Gaursundar, in the company of all the children, went daily for His bath in the Ganges. As soon as He got into the water, He engaged in merry sports in the water with the children who splashed water at one another. Nabadwip was a most opulent city, and the number of bathers at each bathing-place baffled all calculation. They included very staid persons, respectable and grave fathers of families, and revered *sannyāsins*, as well as a very large number of *urghins*. The Lord, sporting in the company of the children, soon attracted the atten-

tion of everybody by the extraordinary Beauty of His Person and by His turbulence. As the Lord played with the children, the shower of water from His Feet drenched all bathers. He paid no attention to the expostulations of the aggrieved parties and moved about so quickly from place to place that no one could catch hold of Him. In this manner the Lord made everybody bathe over and over again. He would touch some of the bathers and even spouted the water by His Mouth at them!

The Brāhmaṇas, who were also treated in this unorthodox fashion, unable to catch hold of the turbulent Boy, at last went to Jagannāth Misra and laid before him their grievances. 'It was impossible for any one to bathe in the proper manner in the Ganges. Sree Gaur-sundar disturbed one's meditations by the summary method of deliberately dashing the water at him or by spouting water at a person in the act of meditation for the *avowed* reason that it was unnecessary to meditate any more, as one could actually see Him on Whom he meditated, by simply opening his eyes, standing before Him; He Himself being Nārāyaṇa manifest in the *Kali Age*'.

The Boy, it was alleged, stole one's *phallic* symbol of Siva and decamped with the upper cloth of another. He occupied the seat prepared for Vishnu, ate all the offerings and put on His own person the flowers, etc., while the owner of them was engaged in his bath preparatory to worship, and ran away before He could be prevented, and would retort, into the bargain, 'that one need not feel sorry at all as He Himself, for Whom the offering is meant, has eaten the same.' Thereafter, coming forward unobserved by diving under the water, He would drag away a bather by the legs, as he was engaged in performing his *sandhyā* standing up in the water. The flower-basket and loin-cloth of another were always missing. The *Geetā* of one bather was stolen. He had made the baby-boy of another cry by putting water into the ears of the child. He had climbed one's back to his shoulder and from there jumped back into the water, crying 'I am Mahesha'. He Himself worshipped Vishnu by occupying the seat arranged for worship by another, after having first eaten the intended offering. He threw sand at one's body, after one had finished his bath, and had for the

purpose all the naughty boys at His heels. He put the cloths of all male persons in the place of those of females and *vice versa*, to the utter shame of all who put on the wrong cloths. This was done *every day*. He did not get out of the water for half the day. Was it not likely that He might fall ill?

These Brāhmaṇas were not the only complainants. The girls had serious grievances which they duly laid before Sachi Devi. He stole their cloths, abused them and got up a quarrel if they protested. He forcibly took away all the flowers and fruits brought by them for performing their vowed worships (*brata*) and scattered them in all directions.

As, after bathing in the Ganges, the girls began to worship the gods, Nimāi would appear on the spot with the other children and took His seat in the midst of the girls. He asked the maidens to worship Him and told them that He would give them the boon they desired, that Gangā and Durgā are His maid-servants and Mahesha is also only His servant. With His own hands He put the sandal-paste on His Own Person, wore the garlands of flowers, snatched the intended offerings from the girls and ate them. The girls were very indignant and said that 'He was their brother by the relationship of the village. It was not proper for them to say all this against Him. But He should also not take away their articles for the worship of the gods and should not be boisterous in His behaviour.' To this He would only say, 'I give the boon to all of you. The husbands of you all will be most beautiful, learned, adept, youthful and possessing an abundance of grain and other riches. Every one of you will have seven sons a-piece, all of whom will live for ever and be of an excellent understanding.' The girls were much pleased at heart on hearing about the boon, although externally they took up the scolding attitude by the display of false anger. Some of the girls ran away with their offerings. Nimāi, however, called out to them and angrily told them that if they proved miserly and did not give Him their offerings, they would have old husbands with four co-wives. They were extremely frightened on hearing this, lest He might possess some supernatural art or be possessed by any deity. They accordingly brought their

offerings back to Him. The Lord ate those offerings and then gave them the boon which they desired. He threw sand at their bodies, after they had finished their bath, and this was done by Him at the head of all the naughty children. Coming up unobserved He shouted into one's ear with a loud voice. He spouted water with His Mouth at one's face. He stuck the prickly seeds of *okhrā* into the hair of a third. He wanted to marry some. He did this every day, as if He was the Son of the King. *Nimāi*, they alleged, acted exactly as the Son of Nanda in old times. If he was not checked, they would be compelled some day to tell their parents, and then there would be serious trouble.

On hearing all this the mother of the Lord smiled and, taking all of them on her lap, spoke kindly to them: 'Let *Nimāi* come Home to-day. I will tie up His Hands and Feet and punish Him, so that He may not again cause any trouble to you.' Then the girls, after taking the dust of Sachi's feet on their heads, made their way once more to the Ganges for their bath.

But, as a matter of fact, all concerned were exceedingly pleased in their minds, however wayward might be the conduct of the Lord towards them, by the force of the actual benefit dispensed. They came to Misra to acquaint him with those occurrences, only for the fun of it. Misra, however, took their complaints seriously and spoke threateningly and with anger: 'He constantly behaves in this way to all persons and has made it impossible for any one to bathe in the Ganges in a satisfactory manner. I must immediately go there myself and give Him a good thrashing that He may never do this again. If all of you try, you will not prevent me from punishing Him.'

Gaurāṅga, the Lord of all beings, was aware of all this. He knew it all, as soon as Misra was on his way to the Ganges with an angry mind. He was then playing with other children, easily recognisable among them all by His extraordinary Beauty. The girls were the first to inform Him. They said, 'Be careful, Vishwambhar, Misra will be coming just now; fly at once.' As the Lord, taking all the children with Him, ran to catch hold of them, those Brāhmaṇa maidens scattered in a fright.

The Lord now instructed all His companions to tell Misra that his Son had not come to bathe at all. He had gone home from school by the other road. They were waiting for His coming for His bath. After coaching the boys in this manner, the Lord returned home by another path. The good Misra now appeared at the bathing-place of the Ganges. On reaching the spot Misra eagerly looked about in all directions but could not find his Son in the midst of the children. Misra asked them about the whereabouts of Vishwambhar. The children readily replied, 'He has not come to bathe to-day. He went home by the other road after school. We are all waiting here for Him.' Misra, with stick in hand, peered in all directions and stormed and threatened, being unable to find his Boy. Those Brāhmaṇas, who had complained to him for fun, now came forward and informed him that Vishwambhar had fled home for fear; and they entreated Misra to return home but not say any unkind words to the Boy, telling him that they themselves would catch and take the Boy to him, if He again did any mischief. 'What we had told you, was said in fun. There is no one in the three worlds who is more fortunate than yourself. What can hunger, thirst or sorrow do to him in whose home there happens to be such a Child? You alone have truly served the Feet of the Lord. Most fortunate, indeed, is he who has such a Son. If Vishwambhar commits *crores* of mischief, hold Him fast to your bosom.' Misra said, 'That Child is the Son of you all. Swear by me that you will never be offended with Him.' And then Misra embraced them all and came back home.

Lord Vishwambhar had gone home by another path, with the beautiful books in His Hands, looking like a second Moon. Points of writing-ink adorned all parts of His Body, as if the *champaka* flower was besieged on all sides by the black bees. The Lord began to call loudly on His mother asking for oil to rub His Body for going to the Ganges for His bath. The voice of her Son gladdened the heart of Sachi. She could not discover any sign of bath on His Person. She gave Him oil and began to muse. 'I do not understand what those girls and the Brāhmaṇas said just now. His Body is still spotted with the marks of ink and He has the same books and the same cloth!' Presently Misra also

returned home. Vishwambhar ran into the arms of Misra as soon as He caught sight of him. By that embrace Misra lost all faculty of his external activity, having been filled with happiness at the very sight of his Boy. Misra also noticed that His Son's whole Body was full of dust and was astonished on finding no sign of bath. Misra said, 'Viswambhar, is this Your good sense? Why don't You allow the people to bathe? Why do You steal the offerings for the worship of Vishnu? Are You not afraid even of Vishnu?' The Lord said, 'I have not gone for my bath to-day. My companions have gone there before Me. They misbehave to all the people. People blame Me even when I am not really there. If they thus slander Me when I am absent, I say truly that I will really treat them ill.' With these words the Lord ran away laughing to the side of the Ganges to bathe and rejoined those children. As soon as they saw Vishwambhar in their midst, all the children embraced Him and burst into uproarious laughter on hearing of His ruse. They all praised His cleverness and congratulated Him on His narrow escape and resumed their pastimes in the water.

Here at home Sachi and Jagannāth cogitated over the affair. 'What all those people said cannot be false. Why then was there no sign of bath on His Person? The same dusty Body, the same Dress, Books, Cloth and Hair!' 'Is it possible Vishwambhar is no mortal? Has Krishna Himself been born as our Son by His own Power, or some transcendental person?' While they were thinking in this manner, the *Crest-jewel of all the twice-born* made His Appearance. Their deliberations were ended by joy at the sight of their Son. Both were filled with instinctive gladness and all suspicions were laid at rest. Half the day, while the Lord was away for His study, seemed to those two as a couple of Ages. In this manner played the Lord of Vaikuntha and by His Own Contrivance not a single person was able to recognise Him.

Those, who put up with the almost intolerable turbulences of this strikingly beautiful Urchin, certainly possessed a more than ordinary share of patience and of the truly æsthetic and tender sentiment. A naughty boy is most liked, if his naughtiness is purely juvenile and the outcome of an abundance of the pure childish energy. It is in this sense that the extraordinary events of

the Childhood of Sree Gaursundar have been affected to be regarded by His empiric admirers.

But the point of view of the associates and narrators of the Transcendental Deeds of the Lord is altogether different and it is their point of view which will give us the attitude of those who were taught the true relation between the religion and His own illustrative Conduct by Sree Chaitanya Himself; and they had also the opportunity of realising the Absolute Truth of those statements by their actual experience. The sum and substance of their attitude is that these pranks of the Childhood of Sree Gaursundar, Who was by far the most turbulent of all the naughty children who then abounded at Nabadwip, were not only tolerated but they made all those, who were the victims of His turbulence, have an extraordinary affection for the Child Whom a few fortunate persons also regarded as Transcendental. It is on this historical fact that a momentous generalisation in regard to these Activities has been made to rest, *viz.*, that when Godhead Himself appears in this world, He comes here with His Divine Associates and Abode and These *alone* are the directly incorporated helpers of His *Leelā* in this world.

All those persons, who had anything to do with the Activities of Sree Gaursundar, are the eternal associates and servants of the Lord who came into this world for the purpose of participating in His Activities. But they themselves did not know this fully, as such knowledge would take away the possibility of those Activities. So their knowledge was to that extent modified by the Spiritual Power of Godhead. This apparent obscuration of knowledge, that is thus found in His devotees serves to augment the joy of His Pastimes and is totally different from the effect of the operation of the Deluding Power that shuts out the view of the Divinity from fallen souls of this world by the screen of the material world.

The psilanthropists do not understand this vital difference between the apparently similar functions of the two distinct powers and confound the spiritual with the worldly. The result of such ignorance is also most deplorable. A large number of rascals have in all Ages set up as '*Incarnations*' (the term is theirs) of

the Divinity and have imitated the activities, the real *Avatāras* narrated in the Scriptures. The unbelievable boldness and shamelessness of these 'Incarnations' have captured the credulity of even sensuously disposed cultured people who have fallen easy victims to their own immoral designs. These events in their turn have re-acted on the beliefs of the more moral sections and have unfortunately enough served to shake their belief in spiritual claims of any kind.

This is the psychology of the sceptics and impersonalists whose condition is not otherwise different from their deluded immoral brethren who are actually misled to accept the worst forms of vice as the means of attaining the promised spiritual condition. Both these deluded groups remain necessarily confined to worldly activities which are, by their very nature, offensive to Godhead, the one through undue credulity and the other through undue incredulity, regarding one's imperative spiritual duty.

True belief in Godhead is spontaneous and, in its natural form, is very rare in this world. Those who really believe in God are thereby freed from all worldliness. The conduct of perfectly pure souls cannot be understood, so long as we remain in the condition that is dominated by the sensuous outlook. The only way of getting out of the sad plight is to gradually acquire faith in spiritual existence by listening to the accounts of the Transcendental Activities of the Lord in His different *Avatāras* from the lips of true *sādhus* who alone can prevent us from falling into the errors of the misguided philanthropists (*prākṛita sahajiyās*) on the one hand and sceptics and atheists on the other, the plight that would befall us if we try to understand those accounts in the light (which is really obscuring) of our sensuous understanding.

The Boy continued to be a source of trouble to all the neighbours. They complained to Sachi that the Boy stole their things and beat their little children. On hearing this Sachi scolded Nimai and ordered Him to remain always at home and never to go to anyone's house. This so much angered the Lord that He forthwith ran into the house and smashed all the earthen pots that He found there. Then Sachi took Him into her arms and He was pleased and felt ashamed for His naughtiness. One day

He struck Sachi gently with His Hands and wept when she fainted away being so struck. The women who nursed Sachi said that if He could get green cocoanuts, His mother would recover. The Lord immediately went out of the house and returned with two green cocoanuts. This feat astonished everybody, as the green cocoanut was a rare fruit at Sree Māyāpur and almost impossible to procure at that time of the year.

One day as Sachi lay in her couch with her Son, she beheld that the house was filled with celestial beings. Sachi asked Nīmāi to call His father. As He was leaving the room to fetch His father, the tinkling sound of anklet (*nupura*) distinctly proceeded from His Feet. Misra told Sachi that he actually heard the sound of *nupura* coming from the bare Feet of the Child. Sachi said that she had a most strange experience. She had beheld that the courtyard of the house was thronged by a great crowd of celestial beings. She did not understand the noise that they made, but could infer that they must have been chanting hymns of praise to some One. Misra said that there was no cause for anxiety, whatever happened. He only desired the welfare of Vishwambhar.

Another day, on noticing the wayward nature of the Boy, Misra scolded Him very severely and tried to instill in Him the principles of orderliness enjoined by Religion. That night Misra had a dream in which he beheld that a Brāhmaṇa came to him and told him with an angry voice that he did not know at all the real truth regarding his Son, and it was owing to his ignorance that he scolded and punished Him under the impression that He was, indeed, his son and protege. Whereupon Misra said that whatever the Child might be in Himself, even if he were a god, a self-realised soul (*siddha*), a contemplative sage (*muni*), or howsoever great a personage, He was still only his own Boy to him. It was the specific duty of a father to teach and maintain his son. If he did not tell Him about it, how would the Boy know the meaning of Religion? The Brāhmaṇa said that if the Child was perfect in all knowledge by the grace of Godhead Himself and possessed spontaneous Omniscience, then his teaching must be perfectly useless. Whereupon Misra said that it was still the duty of the father to teach his Son, even if He happened to be Nārā-

yana Himself. They discoursed in this way, Misra ignoring all other considerations in trying to uphold the point of view of the parent. That Brāhmaṇa was at last satisfied and took his leave of Misra with great pleasure. Misra told all his friends about his dream and all of them were very much surprised to hear of it.

CHAPTER VII

GROWING BOY—(*Continued*)

SREE GAURSUNDAR pursued His studies at the Academy of Gangādās Pandit with great zeal. He soon acquired a great proficiency in the *sutra*, *panji* and *tikā* of *Vyākaranā*. One day the Lord, making obeisance to the feet of His mother, begged for a boon from her. Having made mother promise to give Him whatever boon He desired, the Lord said that she was to promise that she would not eat cooked grain (*annam*) on the Lord's Day (*ekādasi*). Sachi agreed to follow His advice, and from that day observed the *ekādasi* fast.

In this manner Sree Gaursundar continued to manifest Himself in various ways under the guise of childhood pastimes. He was extremely turbulent and restless and paid no heed to the expostulations of His mother who tried to teach Him to be quiet. The warnings and entreaties of His mother seemed only to increase His waywardness. He used to break whatever article of the house He could lay His hands on. The parents, for fear of further mischief, gave up all attempt to oppose Him, to the great joy of the Child, Who was thereby afforded an opportunity of unrestrained play. Nimāi soon ceased to be afraid of all persons, including His parents. The only person, whom He still feared, was His elder brother, Viswarup, Whose very sight made Him exceedingly meek.

Viswarup had no attachment for the things of this world even from His birth. He devoted all His time to discourses about Krishna. He served Krishna with the ear, mouth, mind and all senses, and served only Krishna at all time. Viswarup was struck by the habits of His younger Brother, which were altogether different from those of ordinary children. He realised the conduct of Nimāi as *identical* with that of Boy-Krishna. He was aware

of the Transcendental Divine Nature of the Boy in Whose Form He could detect the Presence of sportive Krishna. Viswarup was, however, careful not to divulge His knowledge regarding His Brother to any one else. He was in fact always intent on His own devotions, was constantly in the company of the Vaishnavas and was wholly occupied with the joy of Krishna-talk, Krishna-devotion and Krishna-worship.

This aloofness of Viswarup from the world increased apace by the re-action of His godless surroundings. The people of Nadia of that time, as has already been noted, were inordinately and exclusively given to the pursuit of worldly objects. This was the condition not merely of the vulgar, illiterate mass, but also of the most highly educated people. The acknowledged headquarters of all learning of the country of that Age was absolutely devoid of love for God. The teachers of the *Bhāgavatam* themselves were no exception to the rule. These also neither understood, practised, nor explained the principles of devotion to Godhead and were equally mad after wives, wealth and fame. It was this godless atmosphere of the emporium of learning, abounding in luxuries of all kinds, that appeared to Viswarup to be so stifling and un-bearable that He at last made up His mind to leave the place for good, to avoid the sight of such people.

Meanwhile He scrupulously avoided all association with the ungodly. He used to bathe in the Ganges very early in the morning and proceeded immediately to the gathering of the Vaishnavas at the house of Advaita. There He explained all the *Shāstras* showing how all Scriptures proclaimed the supreme excellence of devotion to Krishna. His explanations gave so much pleasure to Advaita that he often broke off abruptly in the midst of his worship with thundering shouts of joy and would clasp Viswarup to his bosom amid the joyous chants of the Name of Hari by all assembled devotees moved to raptures by the edifying spectacle. The devotees, assembled at Advaita's house, spent their time in the greatest happiness and no one was minded to return to his home or leave the company of Viswarup. Neither would Viswarup ever come home from His companions.

After cooking his meal, Sachi Devi would ask Vishwambhar to fetch His brother from the gathering at Advaita's. The Lord appeared before the assembly in the midst of Krishna-talk of those devotees. Pleased with their discourse regarding Himself, the Lord would bend His auspicious glance on His devotees as He asked His brother to come home for His meal. He then took hold of His brother's cloth and led Him away from the place.

On every such occasion the devotees felt the wonderful attraction of the Child. They remained silent, abstaining even from Krishna-talk, all the time the Boy was in their midst. They noticed, with rapt attention, every detail of the beautiful Limbs of the nude Child and every motion of His Body, and drank with the greatest joy His luscious Accents. And, after Vishwambhar had left the place, the great Advaita told them one day that he was unable to understand Who that Boy really was. Advaita had realised that He was no ordinary Child.

The subject has been treated in a remarkable dialogue between Sree Suka and King Parikshit in the *Bhāgavatam*. When this very Gaurchandra, says Thākur Prīndāvandas, was born in the settlement of the cowherds as Sree Krishna, all the cowherds loved Him from His birth more tenderly than they loved even their own sons. They did not know that Krishna was Godhead Himself, yet they naturally loved Him more than their own sons.

King Parikshit desired Sree Sukadeva to explain how this was possible, as it was opposed to all experience of this world. Sree Suka said that there is nothing dearer to our souls than the Great Soul of all souls. The Son of Sree Nanda is the Supreme Soul. Therefore, the milkmaids of Braja had greater love for Krishna, as He is the Supreme Soul Himself. But this also holds true only in the case of the devotees; as otherwise, all the world should have loved Krishna. Kamsa and other atheists (*asuras*) bore malice against Krishna, although Krishna is also the Soul of their souls, by the effect of offences against Him previously committed by them. Sugar is naturally sweet. But there are some who find its taste bitter by reason of the defect of their own tongues. The fault is of the tongue, not of sugar. Therefore,

says Thākur Brindāvandās, although Lord Chaitanya is really All-sweet and was visible to everybody in this very town of Nabadwip, yet was He unrecognised by any one except the devotees. The Lord ever fascinates the minds of His Own devotees in every manner. This mystery is incomprehensible to the atheists.

Viswarup would go home only in name and was never attached to it. While visiting home He would spend all His time there inside the chamber of worship of Vishnu. This behaviour led His parents to bethink themselves of His marriage. Viswarup thereupon carried out His cherished resolve of quitting the world. The foremost of the Vaishnavas thus became a *sannyāsin* soon after this and left home in quest of the Infinite. As *sannyāsin* Viswarup was known by the appellation of Sree Sankarāranya.

These events raise a number of important issues. It is necessary to notice one of them at this place. The fascination, that the Divinity exercises over the minds of His devotees, should not be confounded with the clouding of the faculty of judgment produced by an excess of worldly joy or sorrow. The exclusive mood of the devotees at the Sight of Sree Gaurasundar and the similar moods of Suka and Nārada are not to be put into the same category with the outwardly similar exhibitions of ultra-sentimentalism exhibited by the worldlings. The latter is recognised, under the name of *moha*, by all the *Shāstras*, as one of the six evil passions (*ripas*) being classed with anger, lust, etc., that have to be carefully got rid of by all persons who are sincerely desirous of spiritual living. The former is the natural impulse of the pure individual soul who always experiences this spontaneous attraction for the Absolute. The genuine spiritual attraction is not a dry, abstract process; neither does it bear any affinity to the sensuous impulse, to which our body and mind are so wrongly subject, that is exercised by the prospects of worldly enjoyment. Those who have been enabled by their love for the Absolute to overcome the sensuous attraction exercised by the material universe, are thereby enabled to experience the far greater attraction of the service for Krishna. The great Love of Krishna for His servants cannot be consciously realised in the conditioned state. That love for Krishna, which is possible of realisation in the fettered state in

this world, is somewhat analogous to the attraction that is experienced by the cows, the cane, the flute, etc., for the Lord, in the realm of Braja.

Sree Sankarāranya after acceptance of *sannyās* journeyed to various parts and exhibited the state of realised exclusiveness in the Lord (*samādhī*) at Pāndurangpur or Pandhārpur (in the Sholāpur District of the Bombay Presidency).

Sachi and Jagannāth were most profoundly affected by the *sannyās* of Viswarup. Sree Gaursundar exhibited the *Leela* of fainting away at separation from His Brother (devotee). All the people of Nadia, high and low, whoever heard of the *sannyās* of Viswarup, were filled with a great grief. The home of Jagannāth Misra was turned into the abode of mourning. Jagannāth and Sachi cried constantly on the name of Viswarup. The friends and relatives of Misra tried their best to compose him. Some of their arguments bear to be repeated here. ‘Be quiet, Misra,’ said they, ‘that great Soul has earned the deliverance of all His kindred. If a single member of a family accept *sannyās* three crores of generations of that family thereby attain to the happy realm of Vaikuntha. Your beloved Son has performed a great meritorious deed. All His learning has at last been crowned with its supreme success. Rejoice greatly at this. All your sorrows will be removed by this other Son of yours. Vishwambhar will be the Support of the family. What are *crores* of sons to him whose Son is He?’ Misra was inconsolable. He did not feel certain that the other Son will also stay in the family. He could not forget the many good qualities of Viswarup. By slow degrees, however, the worthy Misra picked up patience and regained the equilibrium of his faculties. He was helped in this by his enlightened faith in Krishna. ‘Krishna gave me the Child and has now taken Him away. The Will of Krishna should certainly prevail. The soul of the *jīva* has no tittle of power of his own. I, therefore, surrender myself, my body and senses, to Thee, O Krishna.’

The devotees experienced a clinging sorrow in the midst of their joy, when they learnt of the *sannyās* of Viswarup. ‘Krishna,’ thought they, ‘has robbed us of the only place where we might hear the talk about Him. We also will no longer stay among these

people but will go into the forest where we shall not have to see the faces of these sinful persons. It is impossible to bear longer the torment of the blasphemies of these atheists. All people are constantly pursuing the evil course. We cannot convince them of their error. If we tell them of it, they only receive the statement with ridicule, saying that we are not happier than they in any way by worshipping Krishna. What is the use associating with such people?"

The griefs of neither Jagannāth Misra nor of those devotees, are of the nature of the sorrows that overtake all worldly people at the curtailment of any possibility of their selfish enjoyment. Jagannāth Misra realised the true significance of the *sannyās* of Viswarup. His lamentations, properly understood, are really an expression of his appreciation of the transcendental nature of the Son who had left him for good. This realisation accordingly also effected the *sannyās* of Jagannāth Misra himself. The language of his friends echoes the attitude of the devotees. The devotees, however, fully sympathised with the keen sorrow of Viswarup at sight of the utter godlessness of the people, and appreciated the quality of Viswarup's exclusive devotion to Krishna.

The tears of the devotees are always different from those shed by worldly people. The weeping of the devotees is the expression of their absorbing devotion to Krishna. The tears of worldly people are caused by their aversion to Krishna. Worldly people always think of their own personal joys and sorrows. Outwardly the exhibitions of both seem to be identical to those who are not conscious of their categorical difference; and self-deception in this form is unfortunately by no means rare as is proved by the sicken-ing neurotic performances of hypocritical psilanthropists.

Sree Advaita Āchāryya consoled the assembled devotees. He declared that 'they would assuredly obtain the highest bliss,—he, indeed, on his part felt perfectly sure about it. He experienced a great joy in his mind. It seemed to him that Krishna-Chandra Himself had appeared in the world.' He asked them all to sing Krishna with the utmost delight. He assured them that they would see Krishna at that very place within a short time. 'Krishna will display His joyous Activities in the company of yourselves.

Advaita (referring to himself) is a pure servant of Krishna, only if this prove true. This servant of you all will gain such Divine favour that seldom falls to the lot of even Suka or Prahlāda.' These nectarine words of Advaita filled the devotees with great joy and restored cheerfulness to all the faculties of their minds. In their joy they shouted the Name of Hari with a thundering voice. This reached the ears of Sree Gaurasundar Who was then playing with the children. He entered Advaita's Academy on hearing the sound of Hari. 'What brings Thee here, Darling?' asked the devotees. The Lord said, 'Why did you ask Me to come?' With these words the Lord sped into the midst of the children. No one could understand those, by the contrivance of His Divine Power.

It is the privilege of the pure devotee to have the Sight of Krishna being served by His devotees. Sree Advaita was right in maintaining this view. The empiricists blunder hopelessly, when they arrive at the conclusion, by the process of induction from their sensuous experience, that Godhead is devoid of Distinct Personality and Activities. By trying to know Godhead by the limited faculties of the human mind, the speculative philosophers, when they care at all to take up the positive attitude, arrive at an abstract conception of Godhead (*Brahman*) as the antithesis of this limited and imperfect phenomenal world. This is the utmost limit—the *ultima Thule*—of the ascending (?) effort of the human mind from the data of sense-experience. This consummation is perfectly logical. The human mind can conceive of nothing that is not limited. It, therefore, tries to arrive at the Absolute, simply by destroying the positive content of empiric thought. But this is neither here nor there. The revelationists realise the Absolute, not in this abstract form of the mundane, but as He really is. They find Him as the Living Reality and not an abstraction of the erring mind. They are enabled to receive the knowledge of the Absolute by the resuscitation of the dormant serving faculty of the soul by the Grace of the Absolute Himself. The Absolute descends into this limited world in order to reveal Himself to the redeemed soul of man. When He does so, He is recognised as the Absolute by His pure devotees who are eternally and divinely enlightened.

Advaita, the purest of devotees, was the first among the assembled Vaishnavas to realise the Descent of Krishna into the world. He also simultaneously realised that those assembled Vaishnavas were the servants of Krishna, who had appeared in the mundane world preparatory to the Advent of the Lord Himself. Thus the Whole Truth flashed on the spiritual consciousness of Advaita and he realised in it the special mercy of Godhead towards Himself in response to his single-hearted devotion.

The Lord became a little quieter from the time when Viswarup renounced the family. He was now found constantly at the side of His parents evidently for the reason that they might thereby forget their sorrow. He was also less devoted to play than before and gave more attention to His study. He did not leave His books even for a moment. His cleverness was wonderful. He puzzled all persons over every *sutra* by reading it only once. This became quickly known to all the people who were lavish in their praise of the excellent judgment of the Child and carried the glad tidings to Jagannāth Misra. ‘You are, indeed, most fortunate in having such a Son. There is not another child in all the three worlds who is possessed of His good sense. He will surpass Bṛhaspati himself in learning. He can explain whatever He hears. But no one can explain His puzzles.’

Sachi was very much delighted on hearing these praises of the good qualities of her Son. But Misra was greatly dejected. He now opened his mind to Sachi. ‘The Boy would not remain in the family. The same thing would happen in His case as in that of Viswarup. It was by studying the *Shāstras* in this manner that Viswarup became aware that the world was not true at all, and it was not worth one’s while to live in it for a single moment. It was the knowledge of the transitory nature of the world that made Viswarup quit it. If this Boy came to learn the real meaning of the *Shāstras*, He also would give up all worldly pleasures. But this Son of ours is the Life of us both. If we do not see Him, both of us will surely die. Therefore, He must have nothing to do with study. Let our Nimāi only stay in the family. We do not mind if He is illiterate.’

Sachi at first demurred to the proposal. 'If He does not read anything, how will He earn His living? Will also any one give Him his daughter in marriage?' Jagannāth Misra told Sachi that she ought to know better, as she was the daughter of a Brāhmaṇa. 'Krishna is the only Slayer, Master and Protector of everybody. The Lord of the world is the sole Maintainer of the world. Who had told her that it was learning that maintained anybody? One will surely have the girl whom Krishna assigns to him, whether he be a scholar or a fool. Family, learning, etc., are only apparent helps. It is Krishna Who maintains every one. Krishna is the strength of all. He himself has all along been starving, although he is a good scholar; while the door-steps of the most illiterate persons are thronged with hosts of begging savants. A life that is free from want, and death with ease, can never be the lot of a person who does not worship the Feet of Govinda. These blessings are obtained by worshipping Krishna, and not by learning. There can be no end of one's sorrows save by the mercy of Krishna. The possession of learning, high lineage and great riches does not make any difference. Krishna sometimes afflicts, with some virulent disease, a person whose house is full of all enjoyable things and makes it impossible for him to enjoy any of those things. Such a person is even more miserable than one who has not the wherewithal to procure those luxuries. Know this as certain that *nothing* of this world is of any avail. What is commanded by Krishna, alone comes to pass. Therefore, you need have no anxiety for your Child. I say Krishna will maintain the Boy. I will not allow any sorrow to touch Him, as long as there is life left in my body. Krishna is the Protector of all of us. There is no anxiety for One Who is the Son of a loyal matron like yourself. I tell you He must not read any more. Let my Son only stay with the family and be a fool.' The worthy Misra called his Son and told Him on his oath 'that He *must not read from that day*. He assured his Son that *he* would supply *all* His wants. All He had to do from now was to live at home in every comfort.' Without stopping for a reply Misra hastily left the place to attend to other works.

Nimāi was sorry at heart at this abrupt stoppage of the pleasures of study; but, in obedience to His father's command, He at

once discontinued His studies. His waywardness, however, now increased more and more. It now passed all bounds. He did indiscriminate damage to property both in the house and elsewhere. He took particular delight in smashing everything that came in His way. Some days He stayed away whole nights amusing Himself in all kinds of play with the children.

Two boys hid themselves under a piece of blanket and went about as a bull. In this fashion He and a companion broke up during the night the plantain grove of a household that He had marked out for the raid in the day-time. The inmates of the house lamented their damage under the impression that it was the doing of a bull. The Lord with the children bolted, as soon as people of the house were astir. He would bind fast the door of a house from the outside, preventing the members from attending to calls of nature. As they began to shout in a great perplexity, demanding to know who had done the deed, and tried to find out the mischief-monger, the Lord decamped with His followers. The Lord was occupied in this manner night and day in the company of the children. But Misra did not utter a single word, despite all this.

One day while Misra had been called away from the house on some business, the Lord, indignant at being kept out of His studies, sat on a pile of refuse earthen pots that had been cast away after being used by the family in cooking offerings for Vishnu. The soot from the sides of the pots blackened the whole Body of the Boy as He sat there laughing. The children of the neighbourhood were not slow in conveying the tidings to Sachi Devi. 'Nimai' they said, 'is sitting on the refuse cooking-pots.' The mother was most disagreeably surprised on receiving this news, as she hastened to the spot and found the report true. She importuned her Son to come down from His unclean seat, telling Him that He ought to have known at His age that it was necessary to bathe if one touched a refuse cooking-pot. The Lord at first said that He could not be expected to possess the knowledge, as He was debarred from all study. All places were the same to Him. He possessed no knowledge of good and evil. His knowledge was always one and the same. And when the mother repeated her remarks that He could

by no means be considered clean as He sat in a dirty place, the Lord plainly told the truth to His mother.

'Mother', said He in the manner of a child, 'you are no better than an infant to speak so thoughtlessly. I never stay in any unclean place. The spot where I am, is full of all holinesses. All holy *tirthas*, the Ganges and the rest, abide there. My cleanliness or uncleanness is purely a matter of the deluded imagination. Ponder this well. *Can* there be any sin in the Creator? Even if a thing happens to be impure according to the opinion of men or of the Veda, *can such impurity exist* when it is touched by Myself? As to these pots, there has been no cause of any uncleanness in them, as you yourself used them for cooking the offering for Vishnu. The vessel used in cooking offerings for Vishnu is never made unclean thereby. On the contrary, the touch of pots so used sanctifies all places. For all these reasons I am not staying in any bad place. The purity of all things is due to My touch.'

The Lord laughed in the mood of a child as He spoke these words. No one understood their real meaning by the force of the beneficent Power of the Lord. These words of the Child only amused and made them laugh. Thereupon Sachi asked Him to come down to bathe. But the Boy refused to descend from His seat, although Sachi urged Him to make haste lest father might come to know. 'I will never come down,' said the Lord, 'if you do not allow Me to read.'

The people, who had collected to the spot, now took the side of the Lord. They found fault with the mother for having stopped the studies of the Child. 'All people are most careful to make their children learn to read and write. It is a rare good fortune when a child himself wants to read. There could be no greater enemy than a person who had advised her to stop the studies of the Boy in order to keep Him at home and make a dunce of Him. The Child was not at all to blame in this matter.' They also implored Nimāi to come down, telling Him to go on doing all sorts of mischiefs if He was not allowed to read from that very day.

The Boy, however, still lingered where He was and went on laughing from His seat on the top of the pile of the refuse cooking-pots. Those who saw it were fascinated, and the joy of those

persons of good deeds knew no bounds. Till at last the mother herself went up to the Child and fetched Him with her own hands, The Lord now came away, laughing all the time, like a blue opal shooting its sparkling light in all directions. Thus did the Lord speak out the truth in the mood of Dattātreya; but no one understood it by the interposition of the Power of Vishnu.

Virtuous Sachi, now helping her Son to descend from the pile, made Him bathe in order to be cleansed. Misra then made his appearance. Sachi told Misra everything. 'The Child is grieved at heart by not being allowed to read.' All present pressed Misra to lift the ban. 'He is wise and liberal and should be better advised. What Krishna-Chandra wills, is sure to come to pass. He should, therefore, allow the Boy to read and you need have no anxiety on His account. The Boy Himself is very willing to read. So Misra should forthwith invest the Child with the sacrificial thread on an auspicious day and in a fitting manner.' Misra agreed to their proposal.

The acts of the Child were super-human and astonished everybody. But no one understood their real significance. Occasionally some, who happened to be exceptionally fortunate, told Misra not to regard his Son as mortal child and had advised him to cherish the Boy with the greatest care and affection. The Lord thus passed the days unrecognised and played in the yard of Sachi after the resumption of His studies which He did with the greatest delight by command of His father. The diverse restrictions that have been put upon worldly activities by the religious codes (*smṛtis*) cannot be understood, if they are regarded as intended for the promotion of worldly enjoyment. Those, who uphold the rules, as rules, have found it necessary to secure their observance by promises of enjoyment and threats of misery. This method has been a failure, because it did not take a long time for worldly people to find out that those promises and threats were not really to be fulfilled. Neither did they attract the really intelligent class of people, as they promised only worldly rewards which naturally appeared to such persons to be out of place in religion. This is the plight of canon-ridden (*smārta*) 'Hinduism'. The rules themselves have accordingly lost the effective support of *all* classes.

It does not follow, therefore, that the mode of life enjoined by the *Shāstras* is defective. That mode, if rightly understood, is necessary to be followed for our eternal welfare. The conduct enjoined by the *Shāstras* forms Divinely ordained system for all those who desire to qualify for a spiritual life, that is to say, are prepared to subordinate their apparent temporary, to the real, permanent and eternal interests. Such a desire is possible only in man and constitutes the special privilege and glory of human life.

Material enjoyment does not satisfy man, as it does other animals. The quest of the spiritual is the distinctive, imperative necessity of man. He wants to know why he is here at all. Those, who think that it is the principal duty of man to improve the conditions of his present worldly existence, try to find out the best way of promoting the scope and quality of mundane activities. The *smārtas* also belong to this class. To this category belong, directly or indirectly, most people of this world. There is, however, a class of people who think that it is our principal, nay only, duty to serve the Absolute, irrespective of apparent worldly loss and gain which are transitory and unreal. The *Shāstras* are accepted for their constant guidance only by this class of people. The *smārtas* only pretend to agree with this class regarding their acceptance of the shāstric method. The *smārtas*, however, really want to serve the false ego, which craves for the transitory enjoyment of this world, by the rules of the Scriptures followed by the former who serve the true ego by dint of their natural attachment to the Absolute. The method of the *smārtas* is, therefore, rightly condemned by even consistent worldly people, as being both irrational and ineffective and, in no less unambiguous language, by those who really want to walk in the path of the soul.

The restrictive rules of the *Shāstras* are intended for curtailing the opportunity and scope of worldly enjoyment. This is their negative aspect. But these rules really impose obligations of a positive nature. The object of the rules is to direct the mind towards Godhead. These rules are not numerous nor unintelligible. There are, however, rules of various grades. These Scriptural dogmas differ from ordinary rules of worldly conduct by their

possession of a much more advanced and consistent philosophical nature. In the hands of the *smārtas* these rules have suffered mechanical elaboration and stultification for being adopted to the worldly purpose.

Cooking for oneself is discouraged by the *Shāstras*. The act of cooking meal, as every other act, must be performed only for Godhead. For those who do not want to accept this view, the way is prepared by a number of restrictive observances in regard to cooking done for the appeasement of hunger. These restrictive rules are necessarily superfluous, or rather fulfilled, if cooking is actually done only for Godhead. *If we search for the spiritual principle, it is not difficult to understand the rules*, although it is not possible for a worldly-minded person to follow them consistently, unless he is really prepared to subordinate the worldly out-look to the spiritual requirement.

The ideas of purity and impurity, as applied by the mechanical *smārtas* to lifeless objects, are ridiculous. It is a product of eclipsed cognitive existence due to aversion to Godhead. An object or an act is impure by reference to the attitude towards it of the conscious entity who is responsible for its performance. According to the *Shāstras*, everything is pure which is used in the service of the Absolute by reason of the fully conscious use by the performer of it. An object, which according to the eclipsed point of view appears to be objectionable, is necessarily rendered wholesome, i.e., is purified by being consciously used in the service of Godhead. Whereas the cleanest or most wholesome objects from the worldly standpoint may become necessarily dirty by their unspiritual use. The reference to Godhead is the only cause of purity in its rational sense. The reference of any object to the false ego is the only cause of its impurity. All the Scriptures bear unanimous testimony to the truth of this conclusion.

'The Lord, the Moon of the home of Sachi-Jagannāth, thus enjoyed His childhood sports, infinitely more diverse than are found in this world, of which an infinitesimally small part will be hereafter made known to the world, by way of revelation, by the Achāryya'. These are the words of Sree Brindāvandās Thākur. The words of the Veda reach only the ears of the most fortunate

persons. The rest of the world must submit to receive the knowledge from those few. These sports of Sree Gaur-sundar were witnessed by all the people. Yet no one recognized the Lord. They all took Him to be a mere human child. Similar is the case as regards the words of the Veda. Most people do not really hear them, although they are available for being heard by all.

While Sree Gaurchandra was occupied with these pastimes of childhood, apparently oblivious of everything else, the time for His investiture with the sacrificial thread drew nigh. The friends and relatives of the family, duly invited by Misra, met together in the house of Jagannāth. The different functions connected with the ceremony were distributed among them, each taking up the part that suited him best. There was great rejoicing. The ladies sang of the Excellent Qualities of Krishna amidst frequent exclamations of 'jai'. The dancers kept pace with those who played on the *mrḍanga*, the *sānāi* and the *bañshi*. Brāhmaṇas read the Veda and minstrels recited eulogies. Thus joy assumed a visible form in the home of Sachi. All auspicious planetary conjunctions hastened to serve the occasion. In this manner did Sree Gaur-sundar put on the holy thread of sacrifice.

As the beautiful thread adorned the Divine Form, it seemed as if Sree *Shesha* himself encompassed the Lord in the guise of the slender line. The identical *Leclā* of the Lord, that He performed in His Appearance as Vāmana (Dwarf), was thus re-enacted. Sree Gaur-sundar manifested the *Leclā* of Sree Vāmana to the delight of all beholders. All saw the fiery radiance of the Brāhmaṇa and no longer thought Him mortal.

As is the practice on such occasions, the Lord, with the Brahmachari's staff in His hand and the wallet for receiving alms across His shoulders, went on a-begging tour to the doors of all His devotees. The ladies of every household put as much alms into the wallet of the Lord as their resources enabled them to do, with the utmost satisfaction and with a smiling countenance. The consorts of Brahmā and Rudra and the help-mates of all the contemplative sages (*munis*), assuming the forms of Brāhmaṇa matrons, availed themselves of this opportunity of beholding the Divine Form of Sree Vāmana, and all of them laughingly poured their alms

into the wallet of the Lord. The Lord enacted this *Leela* of Vāmana for the deliverance of all persons.

There is a controversy among worldly sections in regard to the question of the attitude of Sree Chaitanya towards the caste-system. The Lord Himself was born in a Brāhmaṇa family and went through all the purificatory ceremonies that are enjoined by the *Shāstras* for the observance of Brāhmaṇas. Are we to suppose from this that the fact is to be interpreted as favouring the retention of the present caste-distinctions? It has also been pointed out by the controversialists that as a *sannyāsin* Sree Chaitanya resorted to the houses of Brāhmaṇas to beg for His meals. This was apparently the rule, though there were also notable exceptions.

Why did Sree Gaurasundar assume the sacrificial thread? Why was He born in a Brāhmaṇa family? The answer of course is not very difficult to find. What is the harm? The Lord is free to do as He likes. It will be a mistake to suppose that He can be subject to any limitation whatever. The contention, that He should have proved the futility of castes and ceremonials by being born outside caste and refusing all ceremonial, is itself an attempt, of its kind, to limit the unlimited. He was not against caste, nor in favour of it. He was above the caste. The hereditary Brāhmaṇa caste is, however, very different from the scriptural *varna* of Brāhmaṇas who know the Brahman, i.e., the *greatness* of Godhead. The knowledge of the greatness of Godhead is the necessary pre-requisite for attaining to the service of God. Any one who possesses this preliminary knowledge is alone a Brāhmaṇa by *varna*. The knowledge of the *Brahman* is not the effect of seminal birth. A person born in a Brahmana family is born again, i.e., becomes a *dvija*, by the ceremony of investiture with the holy thread. He ceases to be a seminal-born by his formal accepted submission to receive spiritual enlightenment from the spiritual Guide. There are two successive enlightening ceremonies. By the first of these ceremonies, which is called the *upanayana*, the seminal-born obtains the right of listening to the words of the *Veda* from the good preceptor; by the subsequent

ceremony of *initiation* (*dikshā*), he obtains the positive knowledge of the transcendental.

These are the two successive stages through which every disloyal soul has to pass, on the way to the spiritual service of Godhead. These processes have nothing to do with the hereditary caste or lifeless ceremonial that is sought to be monopolised by any hereditary caste.

But Sree Gaurusundar does not merely uphold the non-seminal scriptural Brāhmaṇa ideal and practice in going through the *upanayana* ceremony. He was re-enacting the Activities of Vāmana, that possess a very much higher significance. Vāmana begs for alms from His devotees. Godhead is the Absolute Proprietor of everything. What alms can He beg and what alms can also a soul offer to Him? This is the real point at issue in the Vāmana *Avatāra*. Sree Vāmana begged from King Bali (*Sacrifice*) for that measure of space which is covered by His Three Strides. He encompassed the gross world with one Stride and the subtle material world by the second Stride. The surrender of everything, physical and mental is not enough to satisfy the Lord Who also begs for the surrender of the soul of the *jīva* who is located in the third region, viz., Vaikunṭha which transcends both the gross and the subtle material worlds.

This *Leelā* of the Divine Dwarf was re-enacted by Sree Gaurusundar for the deliverance of all souls. In other words, the individual soul can be delivered from ignorance regarding himself only by the constant practice of this supreme sacrifice. Godhead chose to be born in a Brāhmaṇa family in the *Kali* Age, not to prove that the seminal Brāhmaṇa *caste* is superior to the other seminal *castes*; neither for the purpose of establishing the superior excellence of seminal birth in a Brāhmaṇa family. Sree Krishna had already been born in the family of a cowherd.

By the express testimony of the *Shāstras*, the pseudo-Brāhmaṇas of this *Kali* Age are the worst of all classes of the people. Sree Gaurusundar appeared in a Brāhmaṇa family, in fulfilment of the words of the Scriptures, for showing His mercy to the degraded Brāhmaṇas. As Sanyāsin Sree Chaitanya was a strict observer of the *Shāstric* rules that impose various restrictions

on a person belonging to that order, in order to set an example to the degenerate *sannyāsins* of the *Kali* Age. Such conduct does not mean that a *sannyāsin* is, spiritually speaking, superior to a householder, but that both should really follow the Word of God, if they want at all to serve Him which alone matters. It would be a blunder to suppose that there could be any excellence in any institution if it ceases to serve God, or that any institution which serves the Lord can be inferior to any other, or that any mundane class-difference can apply to the servants of the Lord. Those, who are unduly attached to the vanities of seminal birth or the externals of ceremonials and institutions, are ever condemned to the delusion that their ungodly worldly preferences are endorsed by God Himself. It is not possible to be completely free from the influence of such worldly predilections except by the Causeless Grace of Sree Gaurasundar Manifested in His Activities.

The *Shāstras* fix the eighth year from birth as the proper age for investiture with the sacrificial thread. Such investiture admits one to the right of studying the Word of God under the spiritual preceptor. The Lord was now eligible to study under the spiritual preceptor in the company of other students. He threw out a hint that He would like to study under the great Grammarian Gangādās Pandit.

Sree Jagannāth Misra accordingly took his Boy to the *chatus-pāthi* (Academy) of Sree Gangādās Pandit who received him with the greatest respect. Misra communicated to him his intention of placing in his hands the education of his Boy. Gangādās most gladly accepted his new Pupil.

Gangādās always treated Nimāi with special consideration. The extraordinary Capacity of the Child soon manifested itself. Nimāi fully understood whatever His teacher explained only once. He practised to refute all the explanations of His teacher in order to re-establish them more firmly. The number of students, who attended Gangādās Pandit's classes, was very large. But there was no one who had the ability to find fault with the explanations of Nimāi. On the contrary Nimāi gave constant trouble to all His fellow-students by His puzzling questions. He did not spare even the senior students such as Sree Murāri Gupta, Sree Kamalākānta,

Krishnānanda and their associates. They, however, took this favourably, as they regarded the Child with special affection. Gangādās Pandit was most highly gratified on noticing the wonderful intelligence of his new Pupil and accorded Him the honour of the highest position among all his students.

The Lord went with the boys to bathe in the Ganges at noon after study. To these bathing-places of the Ganges all the students of Nabadwip flocked for their daily bath at midday. The number of students who studied at Nabadwip baffled all calculation. Every single professor taught thousands of students. The pupils of the different teachers quarrelled incessantly among themselves. The Lord was on the threshold of budding youth—a period that is naturally full of strange excitement. He disputed freely with all the students. These quarrels of the students possessed certain invariably common features. The ordinary forms of attack were these: 'Your teacher has no brains'; and 'Look here; he is the only real teacher whose pupil am I'. In this manner, from small beginnings, the pastime soon came to a free fight in right earnest, in which much water was splashed; then sand was thrown; and finally they began to beat one another using clay as the favourite missile. Some were taken in custody by the police on the spot, in the name of the King. Some escaped the royal officers across the Ganges after thrashing their adversaries. These performances acquired such violence and dimension that the entire stream of the Ganges was converted by them into a thick mixture of sand and clay. Women who came to fetch water were debarred from filling their pitchers, and Brāhmaṇas and honest citizens from their legitimate baths. Lord Vishwambhar was the most turbulent of all. He made a systematic tour of all the bathing-places of the Ganges in this fashion. There was no dearth of scholars at any of the bathing-places (*ghats*). The Lord quarrelled with them at every place. Swimming down with the current, the Lord visited all the bathing-places stopping to sport at each of them for some time.

The senior boys were at last fain to ask Him why 'He was so extraordinarily quarrelsome. 'Let the youngsters,' they said, 'ask instead questions for testing one another's knowledge. Only then it could be really known who possessed the correct information of

his *britti*, *panji* and *tikā*.' The Lord welcomed their suggestion and invited all the urchins to put to Himself whatever questions they liked. One of the students protested saying that He ought not to be too boastful. The Lord only repeated His challenge to be asked any questions. The irate scholar forthwith demanded that the Lord would then and there expound all the formulæ of the verbal root. The Lord, desiring them to listen attentively, at once explained all the *sutras* in the correct manner. All the students praised His exposition. The Lord said that He would, however, refute all that He had said to them just then, challenging them to defend the very expositions which they had approved. They were struck dumb with astonishment on recognising that the refutation was also flawless. He told them that He would re-establish the previous expositions and fully satisfied every one by His explanations to that effect.

The senior students were so highly pleased that they enthusiastically clasped Him to their bosoms. Then the boys took leave of Him for that day with the challenge that He should come prepared to answer their questions again the next day. The Lord of Vaikunṭha indulged in these delightful sports in the stream of the Jāhnavi tasting unceasingly the pleasures of learning. It seemed that the all-knowing Br̥haspati with all his disciples, indeed, appeared in Nabadwip for participating in these sports. Jāhnavi's heart's desire was thus fulfilled at last. She had envied the superior fortune of her sister Sree Yamunā, in whose water Krishnachandra had sported in the *Dvāpara* Age. Sree Gaurasundar is verily the Purpose-tree that fulfils all desires. He sported incessantly in her pure current.

On His return home from these sportive performances in the sacred stream of the Ganges, the Lord, the ideal *Brahmachārin*, duly worshipped Vishnu and, having offered water to holy *tulasi*, beloved of Vishnu, sat down to His meal. As soon as meal was finished, the Lord retired to a secluded part of the house with His books. He made His own *tippāni* (annotations) of the *sutras* of Kalāpa Vyakarana and forgot everything else by the sweet taste of books.

Misra noted this exemplary conduct of his Son and was filled with the highest happiness. He knew nothing but joy night and

day. Every day he derived fresh and inexhaustible delight by looking on the Face of his Child. The joy of Misra cannot be expressed in words. He drank in the Beauty of his Son with such ardour that he all but merged in the Body of his Boy with his own frame and all individuality, the consummation so vainly wished by the pseudo-liberationists. But as a matter of fact, the joys of merging in the Divinity or of any other form of liberation are as nothing to the bliss of Jagannāth Misra who had no occasion to think of those coveted trivialities. The Lord of all the worlds is the Son of Jagannāth Misra. The *eternal* father of the Lord is the revered of all the devotees of the Supreme Lord.

Misra experienced all the anxieties of this absorbing and exclusive love for his Boy. The marvellous Beauty of every Limb of Sree Gaursundar, surpassing the loveliness of the god of love himself, filled Misra with constant anxiety, lest his Son attracted the malignant attention of the witches and evil spirits. This fear drove Misra to quit all his claims on the Boy and make a complete surrender of Him to Krishna. Gaursundar laughed as He overheard the outpourings of Misra's prayers. 'Krishna,' prayed Misra, 'Thou are the Protector of all. Deign to cast Thy most auspicious Glance even on my Son. Danger never comes to the threshold of the person who remembers Thy Lotus Feet. Witches, ghosts and bodyless evil spirits haunt those places of sin that are void of the remembrance of Thee. Evil spirits carry their sinister influence to all places where selfish activities and fruitive sacrifices are performed in lieu of listening to the account of the Doings of Godhead which destroys the power of all evil-doers. Lord, I am Thy servant. May Thou protect all that belongs to me, as they are Thine. May no evil nor danger ever come near my Son.' This was the constant prayer of Sree Jagannāth Misra. With both hands lifted in prayer he always supplicated Krishna for this *only* boon.

One day Misra had a most wonderful dream which filled him with the utmost grief in the midst of all this happiness. Rising up in great anxiety Misra prostrated himself in obeisance, reciting the prayer, 'Govinda, may my Nimāi stay in my house. This is the *only* boon I pray from Thee, O Krishna, that my Nimāi may be

a householder and stay in the family.' Sachi noticed this and being greatly surprised asked Misra the cause of his prayer offered to Krishna with such sudden anguish. Misra narrated to her the story of his vision. 'I have had a dream,' said Misra, 'as if Nimbā had shaved His Head. I cannot describe His marvellous attire of *sannyāsin*. He laughed, danced and wept, uttering continuously the Name of Krishna. Advaita Āchāryya and other devotees, forming a circle round Nimbā, chanted the *kirtan*. Sometimes Nimbā seated Himself on the throne of Vishnu and, holding up His Feet, put Them on the heads of all. Four-faced, five-faced, thousand-faced forms sang Victory to the Son of Sree Sachi. All recited hymns of praise to Him from every side with the greatest joy. I was dumb with fear at what I beheld. Then I saw that Nimbā went along on His way dancing, through each and every town, taking with Him *crores* of people. *Lakhs* of *crores* of people ran after Nimbā and sang the Name of Hari, Whose sound rang through the universe. I could hear on all sides only the praises of Nimbā Who journeyed to Puri in the company of all those devotees. It is this most strange dream that has made me so anxious, lest the Boy leave the family through lack of attachment for things of this world.' Sachi Devi did not think that there was any real ground for anxiety, notwithstanding the dream, as 'the Boy was so completely engrossed in His books that the taste of learning had verily become the whole of His duty.' The father and mother of the Lord were of a disposition that was utterly unselfish. They had between them many a discussion on the subject by reason of their exclusive love for their Son.

In this manner Misra passed his days for some time longer and, thereafter, he withdrew his eternally pure form from the view of this world. The Lord wept much at the departure of Misra, like Sree Rāmachandra on the disappearance of Dasaratha. The attraction of Sree Gaursundar is irresistible. The life of His mother was preserved thereby. It is a most affecting topic, and Thākur Brindāvandās, our authority, stops abruptly and confesses his inability to linger on the pathetic subject.

The only point that remains to be noticed in this connection is the statement that the form of Sree Jagannāth Misra is

described as eternally pure and also that he withdrew himself from the view of the people of this world and *did not die*. In fact, the soul is also our only real *body*. The physical case is a temporary accretion as a corrective contrivance for curing our godlessness. But Sree Jagannāth Misra, the father of Sree Gaursundar, is eternally pure plenary Divine Essence and has *no* physical body, as there can be no godlessness in his case. What seemed to godless people as his physical body was really his eternal all-holy spiritual form. The Father of Godhead, who is ever identical with his body, manifested himself in this world of matter, in obedience to the Will of Godhead and for the purpose of participating in the Divine Activities when the Latter appear in this world. He remained visible in this world as long as his part was being played. He ceased to be visible after this function was fulfilled. His manifestation in this world was brought about by the Spiritual Power of Godhead and was a wholly spiritual affair, unlike the birth of sinful *jīvas*, which is brought about by the deluding Power of God and is really transitory and unsubstantial. Those, who suppose that there is no difference between this mortal body and the apparently similar bodies of the eternal devotees of Godhead when they manifest their appearance in this world, ignore thereby the eternal and categorical distinction between matter and spirit. To the material eye of the conditioned soul, the body of a Vaishnava, when by the Grace of Godhead he becomes visible to him, may appear to be material, just as to a jaundiced eye everything seems to be yellow. The defective vision of the sinner is, however, solely responsible for this delusion. The deluded soul is not *privileged* to have the sight of the real form of the Vaishnava. The birth, death and activities of the Vaishnava, although they have an external resemblance to those of conditioned souls, are categorically different from the latter. It is only the spiritual eye, the eye of the pure soul, which can actually see this difference.

The Sorrow of Sree Gaursundar at the disappearance of Misra was not also a delusion. It would, however, be a profane delusion, if we suppose that He felt sorry *for the death of His father*, like ordinary people of this world. To Him Jagannāth Misra can never die. Nor can Misra ever disappear from the View of his Son.

Therefore, neither of these can be the cause of the Sorrow of Sree Gaursundar. Sree Jagannāth Misra's anxiety on account of his Son, lest He became a *sannyāsin*, and Sree Gaursundar's Sorrow at the apparent disappearance of Sree Jagannāth Misra, are instances of Divine Activities which are absolutely free from all taint of unwholesomeness, unlike the apparently similar activities of fettered souls which are altogether unwholesome. There is separation, pang of separation and anxiety at the prospect of separation, also in the Transcendental Realm of the Spirit. The conditions for this are supplied there by the Spiritual Power of the Divinity and are, therefore, also spiritual, that is, absolutely free from all unwholesomeness. This is inconceivable to the fallen *jivas* but is the only Reality obscured to the view of the latter by the joys and sorrows of the physical body and the materialised mind. In the realm of the Absolute, there is no break of existence but only the semblance of it, in order to heighten, diversify and enrich the positive joy of eternal existence. In regard to the things of this world the case is otherwise, and it is the greatest of *mercies* that this is so. Had it been otherwise, it would have only perpetuated the barren experience of mundane activities which are the trivial and unacceptable distortions of the facts of the eternal existence. The Absolute exists by Himself. This physical world has not only a relative but also superfluous, unwholesome and *altogether subordinate* existence. It is so, because everything is *real* in Godhead, although it is often both unnecessary and impossible for the individual soul to understand it, except in so far as it is actually divulged to his *serving disposition* by the Mercy of the Supreme Lord.

CHAPTER VIII

EARLY YOUTH AND STUDENT LIFE

THE LORD still chose to remain self-concealed, passing His days mostly in the company of His mother. Sree Sachi Devi, in lieu of His father, now devoted herself exclusively to the service of the Boy. If she did not see her Son for the fraction of an hour, the power of sight left her eyes, and she would lose all self-consciousness. The Lord also displayed constantly His love for His mother and consoled her with encouraging words. He bade her have no anxieties since He Himself belonged to her, and as He would supply all her wants and fetch for her, with ease, things that were obtainable with great difficulty by Brahmā and Siva. As she gazed on the beautiful Face of the Child, Sachi Devi lost the memory of her bodily existence, not to speak of her sorrows. The Lord Himself, by the mere remembrance of Whom all wants are fulfilled, was ever present to her in the form of her own Son. How could, therefore, any bodily sorrows persist in her? The Lord made His mother the very soul of joy.

There is no desire for selfish enjoyment in the realm of the Absolute (Vaikuntha). The servants of Godhead, who are the denizens of that Happy Realm, being always in the Presence of the Lord by reason of their entire dependence on Him, are altogether forgetful of their own selves. The inhabitants of this mundane world, due to their forgetfulness of Krishna, put their reliance on their own bodies, and are accordingly liable to cherish all those concerns that minister to its transitory pleasures. It is in this manner that fallen *jivas* by their own contrivance become subjected to the various miseries of this mundane world. There was no room for selfish grief in the pure heart of Sachi which was wholly occupied with love for Godhead. The eternal spiritual impulse of maternal affection for the Divine Child alone possesses the quality of causing complete forgetfulness of one's own body. A

worldly mother loves her son for her own selfish pleasure. This is also the case with the so-called *love* of a mundane wife for her husband. All such pretended attachments are impure by reason of their intrinsic selfishness which completely captures the mind the moment it is turned towards the objects of this world.

The Lord Godhead, King of Vaikuntha, thus passed His days in Nabadwip in the form of a Brähmana Boy, in the Ecstatic Bliss of enjoying the moods of His own mind known only to Himself. In the home at Nabadwip the uttermost poverty prevailed. The Lord's commands were ever worthy of the Lord Paramount of the highest gods. He did not care to know whether there was anything in the house. If whatever He demanded was not instantly supplied, it produced the most terrible consequences. He would immediately smash up everything, the house, doors and windows; and, in fact, nothing escaped the fury of His Anger. He was absolutely heedless of the damage done by Himself to His own property. But despite all mischief that was thus done continuously, Sachi Devi was always assiduous in supplying, with all care, whatever He asked for, by reason of her unmixed affection for her Son.

On a certain day as the Lord was about to go out for His bath in the Ganges, He asked His mother for oil and '*myrobalan*' and also for choice garlands of flowers and odoriferous sandal paste, as He wished to worship the holy Ganges with the said offerings after His bath. The mother implored Him to wait for a very short time to enable her to procure the garlands. No sooner did Sree Gaursundar catch her words that she was to bring the garlands from elsewhere, He became terrible as Rudra, the God of Destruction, in His sudden anger. With the words, 'Would you then, indeed, go out for the garlands now?' He entered His apartment raging furiously. Then first of all He vented His wrath on the earthen pots, in which the holy water from the Ganges was stored, and broke all of them. By the stroke of a big stick, He next broke deliberately all those pots which contained oil, ghee and salt. He then smashed all the pots, big and small, that happened to be in the room. Oil, ghee, milk, rice, cotton, paddy, salt, cakes of pulse, *mudga*, were mixed up together on the floor

of the room. He then snatched away all the nets of rope for hanging up articles and tore them to shreds. All clothing that He found in the house shared the same fate. When there remained no article to break, the Lord's anger turned against the house itself. He plied the big stick with both Hands on the house, no one venturing to utter a word of protest. Having smashed the doors and windows, He turned to the trees and treated them in the same fashion. In that mad fit of anger there was no disposition to forgive. When there remained no article to break, His stick showered blows on the very earth itself.

All this while Sachi remained in a state of great fear, almost hiding herself behind a remote corner of the house. The Lord, the Establisher of religion, Himself the Eternal Religion, did not lift His Hands against His mother. Although He was still fully disposed to manifest the fury of His wrath which knew no bounds, yet He did not go against His mother, nor try to hurt her. Having smashed all things, the Lord came out into the yard and rolled on the bare ground with an angry mind. His golden Body became enveloped in sand and was, it is hardly meet to divulge, a wondrous, beautiful Sight.

After thus rolling frantically on the ground for some time, the Lord became motionless. As he lay in this quiet posture, the Lord glanced at the Power that lulls Him to slumber (*Yoga-maya*) and the Lord of Vaikuntha did enjoy His Sleep on the bosom of the Earth. The Lord, Whose resting-place is the All-Holy Form of Sree Ananta Deva, Whose Lotus Feet are ever tended by Lakshmi Herself, the Object of quest of the four Vedas, slept in this fashion in the yard of Sachi! The Lord, in the vesicle of Whose hair there lies afloat an infinitude of worlds, Whose servants have power to create, maintain and destroy, Whose Qualities Brahmā, Śiva and their peers sing with rapture, the Self-same Supreme Lord Himself thus reposed in a deep slumber in the yard of Sachi! The Supreme Lord slept on in the Bliss of His Own Consciousness. The Sight made the gods laugh and cry.

After some time had passed, Sree Sachi Devi, having procured the garlands and made ready all requisites for the worship of the Ganges, laying her hands softly on the Body of her Son, tried to

awaken Him by gently wiping the dust from His Person. 'Wake up, my Darling,' said she, 'see, here are the garlands; take them for worshipping the Ganges even as Thou likest. It is well and good that Thou hast smashed all things of the house. Let it take away Thy Sorrows.' Roused by these words of His mother, Sree Gaursundar, feeling ashamed at heart, set off for His bath without more ado.

After the Lord had left, Sachi made all the rooms clean and prepared to cook His meal. Sachi did not feel the least sorrow in her mind, although the Lord habitually did such intolerable mischief. Sachi put up with all the waywardness of Sree Gaursundar in the same manner that Sree Yasodā bore the restless turn for mischief of Sree Krishna in the cowherd settlement. I have no power to record all the wayward acts of the Lord. But Sachi bore up with all those with unruffled patience of body, speech and mind, like mother Earth herself.

The playful Lord returned home after bath and, having worshipped Vishnu and offered water to *tulasi*, beloved of Vishnu, sat down to His meal. After meal the Lord appeared to be satisfied. He then performed *achaman* and began chewing betel. His mother then spoke gently. 'For what purpose, Darling, didst Thou do all this damage? The house, doors, windows, all articles of the household are Thine. All the loss is Thine. It does not affect *me*. Even now Thou wilt be going off for Thy study. There is nothing in the house wherewith to buy anything. What wilt Thou eat tomorrow?' Hearing these words of the mother the Lord laughed. 'Krishna,' said He, 'nourishes; He will maintain.' With this the Lord of the goddess of learning, book in hand, strolled off to His studies.

A certain interval of time was passed in the joy of study, after which the Lord came to the bank of the Ganges in the evening. Having stayed there awhile, the Lord returned home. He then called His mother and taking her aside gave her two *tolas* of pure gold. 'Mother,' said He, 'Krishna has given this stuff. By changing it, meet all necessary expenses.' He then retired to bed.

Sachi was filled with great astonishment. 'Whence could He procure this gold? He had been doing it pretty frequently of late.'

In fact whenever there was any want of money, He obtained gold in this manner. Was it likely to bode any danger? Did He borrow or know some magical art? Whence, how, whose gold was thus brought? These anxieties troubled the mind of Sachi which was untainted with greed in any form, being perfectly generous. She was also afraid of getting a change for such gold time and again. She always instructed the person; whom she entrusted the changing of it, to do so after he had shown it to a sufficient number of discreet people.

Such conduct in any other boy, as old as Sree Gaursundar, if allowed free scope by his doting mother, would hardly appeal to the judgment of many persons as auguring any good for the future of the child. They would, at any rate, fail to find any decent apology for such excessive and unbounded material liniency. An unruly child is required to be handled, indeed, with tact but also with real firmness if he is to be prevented from getting out of hand. The conduct of Sree Sachi Devi and of Sree Yasodā does not fulfil this ideal of motherhood. Many a child, with an abundance of the animal spirit, have been altogether spoiled by the doting policy of unrestrained motherly indulgence. It should be very difficult, nay almost impossible, for dutiful worldly mothers to appreciate the maternal conduct of Sree Sachi Devi.

Vaishnavism has been charged with the attempt to idolize sentimentalism of the most exaggerated type. Even if for the sake of argument sentimentalism be allowed to possess any outstanding value, it should still be necessary to keep it within natural bounds. The Vaishnava is apparently supposed to know no such limits. He seems to be ready to make a display of his feelings and to evince a great pleasure in carrying his heart on his sleeves. The practical and cognitive sides of one's nature do not thus appear to receive their due recognition in the conduct that is extolled by the Vaishnavas as ideal, which displays an apparently sickening exuberance of the most effusive sentimentalism. This is doubly inexplicable as coming from persons who deprecate all sensuousness.

I think it would not be fair to my readers if I do not avail myself of the first opportunity of trying to clear up misapprehension-

sions that are apt to be entertained even by unprejudiced persons in regard to this feature of Vaishnavism.

Most worldly people *identify* religion with morality. Ordinary morality aims at serving the *jīva* by ensuring for his mundane body and mind an ever-increasing fund of sensuous enjoyment. A child is subjected to rules of discipline in order to aid the realisation of the above object. Waywardness has to be checked, lest it becomes a habit which may stand in the way of the worldly well-being of the child when he grows up. Morality would not be valued and is ignored on principle, whenever it is actually opposed to the worldly interest. The instinct which seems to claim for it an absolute value, is apt to be stifled by the voice of the worldly reason, which secures its victory by pointing to the uncertain, transitory enjoyable consequences of any absolute rule of practice.

There are also those who have tried to prove that the moral instinct itself is the product of those untoward material circumstances which it is set up to correct. The Absolute is thus altogether ruled out, and the purely temporary object is substituted in His place, a procedure which has given to the empiric science of ethical conduct its so-called 'practical' and definitely worldly character. The rule of expediency has been openly adopted as the final principle of rational human conduct, the object being the amelioration of worldly wants and the consequent extension of worldly happiness. It is taken for granted that there is nothing beyond our present pleasures of this world that need be considered as really valuable. This scheme undoubtedly possesses the qualities of clearness and apparent feasibility. It is admittedly incomplete, as it professes to be ignorant of many things. But if it be identified with religion, it becomes necessary to suppose that there is a dead void beyond the activities of this world, as they are practised by the majority of us. This would be inconsistent with the *ideal* ordinarily professed to be cherished by the empiric moralists.

But it may be urged that, even if morality is not wholly identifiable with religion, it should not, therefore, be also ignored by the latter. If it be pleaded that morality, in the above sense, forms an integral part of religion, this would also be illogical. Such a

proposition really begs the question to be proved. The whole scheme of morality is based on a definite and unwarrantably narrow view of life. Is it logical to insist that such narrowness should be allowed to remain intact even after the view of life has been infinitely widened? All we can insist on is that morality must be incorporated in Religion in so far as its retention may not defeat the purpose of Religion. We cannot insist that it must not be enlarged, while admitting that expansion is not mere destruction or involving the loss of any wholesome interest.

It is not asserted that no evil consequences, in the worldly sense, can result from the licensed extreme waywardness of an earthly child due to fond indulgence shown to such a Child by a doting earthly mother. A man of this world will be punished, if he breaks any law of this world. One, who is in quest of worldly pleasures, will not gain (?) them by neglecting to follow the course apparently laid down by God Himself for their attainment. A wayward child, who merely refuses to submit to the laws of physical Nature, will incur and deserve the punishment that is attached to such conduct by such law. On the other hand, one who does not desire to enjoy material pleasures is also punished as he chooses to go against the laws of Nature. It is not possible for any possessor of the physical body and limited mind to be immune from the operation of the laws of physical Nature.

But Sree Gaursundar and Sree Sachi Devi, although they may appear to us to be like the people of this world, really belong to the transcendental sphere. They act in accordance with the innate freedom of that higher realm. It would be unwise, therefore, for us, while we are situated in this world, to try to imitate their conduct or to condemn it for the mere reason that it does not correspond to the ideal of mortals. They are beings of another world, endowed with other and higher natures, who have chosen to appear in our midst, independently of the laws of this world. Therefore, what we have to do is to try to learn about that other world from what they say and do. That would be the proper and logical attitude on our part. We must by no means try to *imitate* them. We shall be punished by the laws of this world, if we try to do so.

In that transcendental world waywardness need not be checked, as no evil consequences are produced, everything being perfectly pure and harmonical and incapable of being curtailed by hostile conflict with anything else. Our souls in their normal state are the denizens of that happy realm. We have been hurled into this nether world by our disinclination to avail ourselves the freedom of that world. We can regain our natural state of purity and unalloyed bliss, if only we agree to accept the Higher Law. Godhead and His beloved ones come down into this world to remind us of our true native land and enlighten us regarding the cause of our exile therefrom. The words of the people of the Spiritual Realm are identical with their conduct. Both mean the same thing. Godhead and His beloved ones come down into this world to tell fallen *jivas* the tidings of Vaikuntha and, lest they misunderstand their words by supposing them to refer to the things and conditions of this world, Godhead makes All His Activities of Vaikuntha visible to mortal eyes. Even a mortal can see them with the eye of faith, that is to say, if he is disposed to love and obey Godhead which is the only law of the Spiritual Realm. On the contrary, if we seek to please ourselves, those very visible Divine Activities present only their deluding, *i.e.*, seemingly worldly, face to us.

Common misapprehensions in regard to Vaishnavism owe their origin mainly to that natural aversion to Godhead which is the sedulously cultivated *second nature* of all fallen *jivas*, and partly to the misleading activities of the pseudo-Vaishnavas who, in the state of sin, *imitate*, without caring to understand its real significance, the external conduct of the true devotees of Godhead. The conduct of the true devotees of Krishna is always perfect and combines in itself, without necessitating the least curtailment, the principles of knowing, willing and feeling in the fullest harmonious measure. To us who are wholly sensuous, the Perfectly Pure Activities of God necessarily appear as being also wholly sensuous. They are, however, absolutely pure and without any mundane defect. But this can be fully realised only by the soul who is himself free from all earthly taint. The Activities of Godhead and His devotees redound to our lasting good, if they are approached with a *serving disposition* as manifestations of the Divinity by the *method of*

listening to the account of them *from the lips of the true devotees* of Godhead. By this method and this method alone we, fallen *jivas*, may be enabled to understand their real meaning and thereby learn to obey Krishna. If they are approached for any other purpose, they only show their deluding face to us. The pseudo-Vaishnavas are as much more deluded than even those who are openly and frankly sceptical. Both are equally attached to the pleasures of this world; but the former further try to extend the scope of their sensuous enjoying propensities also towards spiritual matters. They seek to procure sensuous pleasure by aping deliberately the performances of the *sādhus* with fatal consequences both for themselves and their followers. The sceptics are right in holding the pseudo-religionists to be worse than themselves; but they certainly carry their aversion to undue lengths by supposing that the true worship of Godhead, described in the Scriptures, is itself non-existent or harmful. This is the real punishment of such worldly scepticism.

The Supreme Lord, Who could have easily disarmed the opposition of all the people, even the most sceptical, by the display of His Divine powers, chose to remain in obscurity, and went on with His Pastimes, in this manner at Nabadwip. At this period He never left off His books for a single moment. He was most assiduous in His studies in the company of the other students among whom He could be easily distinguished by His extraordinarily beautiful Appearance. He looked as if the god of love himself had become manifest on this earth. His Appearance of this period is thus described by Thākur Brindāvandās: "The beautiful *tilaka* mark, pointing in an upward direction, adorned His Fore-head. The profusion of curly hair that graced His Head captivated the minds of all beholders. The sacrificial thread was placed gracefully across His Shoulder. He was the Living Form of the fiery Brāhmaṇa spirit. His cheerful and beautiful Face was always covered with smiles. His Teeth were perfectly pure. The pair of His lotus Eyes were inexpressibly wonderful. His Cloth, worn with a triple *kachchha*, was a thing of most marvellous beauty. Whoever beheld Him gazed on His Beauty and found it impossible

to take away their eyes from Him. There was no one who did not pay Him the tribute of his unstinted praise.'

The wonderful manner of His expositions filled His teacher with unbounded joy. His teacher, leading Him by his own hands, made Him occupy the highest seat among all his pupils. The teacher said, "My Dear, read attentively. I strongly declare that Thou shalt be the Greatest of Teachers." The Lord replied, "Is the position of the Greatest of Teachers difficult to be attained by One Who has your blessing?"

No student could answer the questions of the Lord. He Himself settled the interpretation of the *sutras* and then refuted His own explanations. And when no one was able to establish the right meaning, the Lord explained the text in the proper manner. The Lord had no other thoughts except the *Shāstras*, whether at His bath, at His meal or in His walks.

The Lord thus came to be looked up to as almost their Teacher by the pupils of Pandit Gangādās. Early in the morning, after performing the *sandhyā* ceremony, the Lord went out to study in the company of all His students. He then took His seat at the assembly-hall of Gangādās Pandit and was constantly engaged in polemical discussions in opposing or supporting propositions that might be advanced. The Lord always deprecated those students who did not avail themselves of His Teaching, mercilessly using every opportunity to expose their ignorance. After study with Pandit Gangādās the Lord expounded the texts to the pupils. The leading students, each with his group of junior followers, sat round the Lord in different rows, all with the solitary exception of Murāri Gupta who alone refused to be coached by the Lord, for which reason the Lord was never tired of exposing his defects.

While explaining lessons to the students, the Lord sat in the centre wearing his cloth in the style of *Yogapatta* and in the posture of the seated warrior (*beerāsana*). The upward *tilaka* mark of sandal-paste adorned His Forehead. The glow of the rows of His charming Teeth put to shame the lustre of pearls. The Lord was in His sixteenth year in the bloom of budding youth. His beauty enchanted the god of love himself. He displayed a scholar-

ship that was deemed superior to that of the celestial sage. He ridiculed all who did not study under Him. He was very proud of His learning and would challenge everybody to refute His conclusions. He often declared that those, who did not know how to combine two words by the process of *sandhi* (compounding), dared to set up as expounders of the texts in order to console themselves with the idle vanity that they could really understand the books by their unaided intelligence. Many persons unfortunately turned out fools by reason of such vanity which prevented them from learning from their betters.

This was intended for Murāri Gupta who would remain silent and obdurate even under this severe castigation. But the Lord always loved to poke His servant whose sight filled Him with joy. The Lord would ask Murāri, who belonged to the *vaidya* caste, to betake himself to his legitimate trade of healing sick persons, by giving up study: 'The *Vyakarana Shāstra* was difficult in the extreme. There was no prescription in it for phlegm, bile or indigestion. What will you understand of it by your assiduous cogitations? Better go back home and treat your patients.'

Murāri, though of a fighting temperament was prevented from being angry by looking at Vishwambhar, and only replied, "What a great personage! You poke everybody and brag a good deal. You are *author* of *sutra*, *britti*, *panji*, *tika*, etc. But did You ever fail to get a reply to Your questions from me? Without asking any questions You say, 'What dost thou know?' You are Brāhmaṇa and worthy of my reverence. What can I say?" The Lord said, 'Explain then what you have read to-day.' As Gupta began to construe, the Lord began to refute. Gupta explained in one sense, the Lord expounded in another. The Master and the servant were equally matched and neither could score a decisive victory.

Gupta was most profoundly learned by the power of the Lord. The Lord was delighted by hearing his explanations. Being pleased, the Lord touched his body with His Lotus Hand and forthwith the whole frame of Murāri was thrilled with joy. The thought flashed in the heart of Murāri Gupta, 'This Person is

never a man of this earth. Such scholarship is also impossible in man. By the Touch of His Hand one's body becomes full of transcendental bliss. There is no humiliation to study under Him. In the whole of Nabadwip there is not another who possesses such excellent understanding.' The worthy Gupta being highly pleased said, 'I say, Vishwambhar, I agree to study under Thee.' Godhead and His devotee ever engage in such blissful Pastimes. They went off to bathe in the Ganges after this learned encounter, in the company of all the students. Godhead Himself tasted the delights of study in this manner, as Student.

These details have been handed down by the associates of Sree Chaitanya, regarding His Student Career. Study divorced from religion is not only considered now-a-days to be useful, but also as a necessity. Religion, which appeals to 'authority,' is supposed to be the antipode of that 'freedom of thought' which is considered necessary for really successful pursuit of knowledge. Knowledge is never pursued for its own sake. In gathering knowledge we suppose to make use of a faculty which the Great God has mercifully bestowed upon us for our physical and mental improvement. This may also be supposed to be corroborated by the conduct of Nimai as Student. He also devoted Himself whole-heartedly to the acquisition of secular knowledge, e.g., Grammar, which is the science of language. He rebelled against His parents, when He was a mere Child, when they stopped His secular studies. He was the terror of all the students for His acumen in purely secular controversy. Does all this look like tame submission on His Own Part to authority by relegation of freedom of thought? It is true He led the life of the ideal *Brahmacharin* and daily worshipped Vishnu and honoured the *tulasi* and *maha-prasada*. But those did not prevent Him from the undiluted pursuit of purely secular studies. His method as well as object as student may thus appear to be *identical* in practice with those of modern pedagogics.

Why did He find fault with everybody and specially the teachers? He boasted that no one could meet His objections, nor refute His interpretation. The evident implication is that according to Him *all* those teachers were wandering in a maze of errors. Even as Student He wanted all persons, including the

Professors themselves, to learn *from Him*, and not to depend on themselves. We have the recorded testimony of the Vaishnavas of that period that the learned Professors were no less deeply engrossed than others in the pursuit of worldly objects. This plan was also carried into their Academies in which, in place of the pursuit of Truth, was substituted the dissociated study of different secular subjects, such anarchy being mistaken for real freedom. The result was the absolute want of all real scholarship and the utter disregard of the only proper object of all studies. The conclusions of such spurious scholarship only confirmed the reign of ignorance. Nimāi had no respect at all for this system or its products.

European psychologists have tried to establish the *rationale* of the exclusive pursuit of isolated branches of knowledge, by their denial of the very existence of a soul who is located beyond the jurisdiction of the mind. They make the limited mind identical with the soul. They want to add to the defective equipments of the mind. This they call spiritual effort, as in their opinion the mind is *identical* with the soul. The mind, thus furnished with knowledge, is regarded as being thereby rendered more capable of successfully performing the various duties of this life. One's duties are also supposed to be properly performed, if the worldly consequences of one's acts are duly considered and provided for, the object again being to obtain the maximum pleasant results in the worldly sense. The mind, which lives, moves and has its being in this World, is to be enabled to do all this in such manner that it may not only fall foul of the laws of Nature, but may avail itself of them for overcoming the unpleasant possibilities represented by those very laws. The policy may properly be described as the application of the principle of '*divide and rule*' to Nature. This mastery over, or enjoyment of, physical Nature, according to fashionable Philosophy, is the goal of *spiritual progress*.

The Pandits of Nabadwip of the time of Sree Chaitanya were famous for their learning and also for their aversion to Krishna. They had no idea of obeying 'authority,' that is to say, of *serving* anybody excepting themselves. The means, whereby this result was to be achieved, might have been more defective than now-a-days, as was to be expected in that comparatively *backward Age*,

Their exclusive pursuit of Grammar, Logic and such ‘abstract’ subjects was the cause of their lack of worldly ‘prosperity,’ as was also the case in other countries in the mediæval period. The pursuit of scientific knowledge by the methods of observation and induction has ensured the wonderful material progress of the present day. The agreement between empiric method and object, which was then lacking, has been effected with greater success by the ‘free’ efforts of the human mind during the last four centuries. Might not Sree Chaitanya’s objection to the comparatively barren pursuits of the Pandits of His day have been due to His perception of this defect in the systems of the studies of His time?

Let us take a hypothetical case. Let us suppose that we possessed a vision that enabled us to find out the details of the operation of all the laws of Nature. What use would we then make of this knowledge? Would we try to submit to those laws or control them by making them oppose one another? Why should we consider it our duty to be able to do either? In what way does it profit us? It would be excellent amusement to be able to manipulate Nature in the way we like. But why do we at all desire to do it? Would we be really satisfied by the temporary seeming possession of this power? It would not enable us to eliminate our bodily and mental sufferings. It would only modify them. But such modification, in itself, would also be an equally intolerable suffering, if we are thereby doomed to live perpetually under limiting conditions of that sort. So we arrive at no satisfying goal of our efforts by the method of merely modifying the opportunities of material enjoyment, mental or physical, which is the professed and exclusive object of the empiric scientists.

Did Sree Chaitanya only want us to follow this so-called advanced scientific method and object? Did He want us to be more engrossed in material pursuits? The Pandits of that time had made great progress in the sciences of abstract Logic and Grammar. It would be difficult even at the present day to suggest any considerable improvement of the knowledge they then possessed of those subjects. Modern science has put its seal of approval on the abstruse speculations, in those fields, of the ancients, although it has supplemented them by the methods of more

careful observation of phenomena on which all empiric knowledge is supposed to be based.

The science of Indian Grammar is apparently one of the greatest triumphs of inductive generalisation from observed phenomena. Sree Chaitanya seems to have objected neither to the empiric method nor to the subject of investigation. His objection applied to the interpretation. Interpretation means the establishment of the connection of a subject with the self. The interpretations of Nimāi were true. The interpretations of everybody else were fallacious. In the absence of the right interpretation, all so-called knowledge remains external to the self and is liable to be used in a way that is harmful to the self. The right interpretation of phenomena can be known by the mercy of Godhead and learnt only by submission to Him. Without this allegiance to the Supreme Lord, all so-called knowledge becomes only a dangerous delusion, although we, in the unsubmissive state, are not properly aware of this. We shall presently learn more regarding this matter, when we consider the Activities of Nimāi as Professor of the Real Science of Grammar.

CHAPTER IX

PROFESSOR LIFE AND MARRIAGE

NIMAI now set up His own Academy in the Hall (*mandap*) of the family temple of the goddess Chandi which formed part of the frontal division of the residence of Mukunda-Sanjaya, a person of great good fortune and an opulent citizen of Nabadwip. The whole family of Mukunda-Sanjaya was devoted to the Lord. The spacious Chandi-Mandap accommodated a very large number of students. The Lord organised the body of His students into a school and taught them at this place. Thus was formed the Academy under Sree Gaurāṅga as Professor for the pursuit of learning.

The variety of Niṁai Pandit's interpretations and refutations knew no limit. In these erudite performances the Professors of Nabadwip were a standing subject of His regrets. He used to say that in the Iron Age those, who were ignorant of the elementary process of joining together two syllables (*sandhi*), which forms the opening chapter of the science of language, passed themselves off as Professors of the *Shāstras*. "I challenge them to expose My mal-interpretations. I would admit they deserve their high-sounding designations of '*Bhaṭṭa*' and '*Misra*', if they can point out any flaws in my interpretations" The learned performances of all the Professors were declared to be 'only tissues of elaborate falsehoods which prevented them from realising the necessity of learning about the Truth by submission to Feet of Truth Himself. If those learned men had possessed the requisite degree of sincerity and clearness of thinking, they would have been inquisitive to know what He had to tell them.' But they were perfectly content with their ephemeral and misleading speculations and did not feel the least inclination even to give a hearing to their *Challenger*.

So it is not the manipulation of so-called material advantages by the pursuit of the different branches of empiric study that can rescue empiric learning from the charge of mischievous worthlessness. The relation of empiric learning itself to the Truth and to oneself must be grasped, if it is to be of any real use to a person. The absence of this knowledge vitiated the whole thing *ab initio*. It is owing to this fundamental defect that such studies only added to the delusions of obstinately ignorant persons. If those studies had been conceived and carried out in the proper spirit, they would have certainly led them to the *Truth*. But the real object and method of study are hidden from the view of deliberately ignorant persons and the knowledge of them can be had only from those who know about Him by unconditional submission at His Holy Feet. The Professors of Nabadwip did not know this, and their interminable labours accordingly only served to multiply their delusions and falsehoods which led their pupils and themselves farther away from the Truth Who is admittedly the Only Goal of all learning.

Sree Sachi Devi now bethought of finding a suitable bride for her youthful Son. There lived at Nabadwip a most worthy Brāhmaṇa of the name of Sree Ballabha Āchāryya who managed his household in the spirit of King Janaka of yore. He had a daughter whose name was Lakshmi and who was the same as Sree Lakshmi Devi of Vaikunṭha. The Brāhmaṇa constantly thought of a suitable Husband for his daughter. Lakshmi was well-known to Sree Sachi Devi and Nimāi Himself.

Kavirāj Goswāmi has recorded the following incident of the Boyhood of Nimāi in his work *Sree Chaitanya-charitāmṛta*. In His Boyhood Nimāi was extremely turbulent and a source of trouble to everybody. He took particular delight in teasing the people while they were in the act of bathing in the Ganges. The details of these occurrences, as described by Thākur Brindāvandās, have already been reproduced. Nimāi, as we saw, did not spare even the girls from His turbulent attentions. One day as the daughter of Ballabha Āchāryya was preparing to worship the gods after her bath in the Ganges, the Lord saw her and felt an inclination to make her acquaintance. Lakshmi also was delighted to

see the Lord. The love between Lakshmi and the Supreme Lord is eternal. It now manifested itself under the guise of childish behaviour. They expressed Their mutual joy under pretence of worshipping the gods. The Lord said to her, 'Worship Me. I am the Great Lord (*Maheshwara*). By worshipping Me you will get such Husband as you wish to have.' Lakshmi accordingly placed on His Body flowers sprinkled with the sandal-paste and did reverence by putting on Him garlands made of the *mallikā* flower. The Lord began to laugh on receiving her devotion and accepted the desire of her heart by reciting the *shloka* of the *Bhāgavatam* spoken by Sree Krishna to the milkmaids, 'Loyal maidens, I have become aware of the meaning of your worship which has, indeed, given Me very great pleasure. Your hopes are worthy of fulfilment.'

The Lord also wished to perform the duties enjoined by the *Shāstras* on a householder, as He was now settled in the household life. The spiritual duties of a householder cannot be discharged properly without co-operation of a helping female partner. The Lord accordingly conceived the desire of entering the state of matrimony. In the words of the *Smṛti*, 'the house itself is not called the household. The mistress is the real household. Being united to her by marriage a person attains the *four* coveted objects of life, viz., the proper performance of his duties, necessaries, objects of desire and liberation.'

While He was in this mood, the Lord accidentally came across the daughter of Ballabha Āchāryya on her way to the Ganges. He was then returning home from His studies. The sight kindled, in the hearts of both, the love that already existed there in its perfection. The Lord smiled as He met His Own Lakshmi. Sree Lakshmi Devi also greeted in her mind the Twin Lotus Feet of the Lord before They went back to their respective homes. 'Who,' asks Thākur Brindāvandās, 'can understand the Pastimes of Sree Gaursundar?'

The institution of marriage, as every other institution, misses its proper object if it does not serve the Supreme Lord. The prospect of carnal enjoyment, which the institution seems, to the

ungodly, to offer, is the snare that requires to be most carefully avoided. The Union of Lakshmi and Nārāyana is the Source of all manifest and non-manifest existence. Sree Nārāyana is the only Lord of all created things. He creates through the medium of Sree Lakshmi Devi. This eternal Marriage of Sree Lakshmi-Nārāyana is hidden from the view of mortals by the shadow of the desire for carnal enjoyment falling across their vision.

The *Shāstric* institution of marriage is intended to reclaim bound *jivas* from the deadly slough of carnality. If they follow the life enjoined by the *Shāstras* for the married state, they will thereby be enabled to progress towards freedom from the fascination of carnality. The bound *jīva*, misled by his sensuous hankering and preferring his own selfish enjoyment to the constant and eternal service of his Lord, is, of course, free to speculate about the advantages and disadvantages of the institution of marriage from the purely secular point of view. But such speculative attitude, however carefully one may try to guard oneself against the natural and inevitable consequences of carnality, will only forge a stronger chain to bind him to an unnatural and miserable existence.

The external gloss supplied by godless speculation only aggravates the real mischief by hiding the unspirituality of all empiric conceptions of one's duty. The Greek opinion that the gods are opposed to the happiness of man through malice is true in this sense. The gods always try to prevent the sensuous happiness of man. This is most beneficial in its possible results for humanity. The so-called happiness for which man hankers is but gilded misery, because the soul in the conditioned state understands and cares only for the things of this world. This is the disease to which all people of this world are subject. This malady is increased if the cause of it is strengthened. By increased hankering for new opportunities of material enjoyment, the cause of the malady is not likely to be removed.

The quest of happiness itself is not unnatural. But if we want to be happy, we must first of all try to understand what can make us truly happy. Desire for sensuous enjoyment is the cause of unhappiness. Abstinence from such enjoyment also will not do, as it leads to a worse form of misery. Desire to serve the Lord for

the sake of service can alone make us happy. Every activity can give us happiness to the extent that it is really service of Godhead, or, in other words, to the extent that it tends to absolute submission to Him.

The marriage of Lakshmi and Nārāyana does not belong to the category of the carnal marriage of sensuous *jivas*. The marriage of the fettered *jivas* becomes successful, according to the *Shāstras*, only if it succeeds in reclaiming them from the bondage of carnality. When this result is actually produced by faithfully following the injunctions of the *Shāstras*, there should necessarily remain no carnal desire in such persons and, therefore, no further sensuous necessity of such bodily union. This is, however, only the negative result. By the elimination of carnality one also gets rid of the delusion that the soul can be either male or female, or have any sex in the worldly sense. No individual soul can be an object of reciprocal enjoyment of another individual soul, either as male or as female. Spiritual love for Godhead is not the mundane sex-feeling or any kind of manipulation of the same. Spiritual love is the natural and perfectly wholesome relationship that exists eternally between immaculate individual souls (*jivas*) and the Supreme soul. In that relationship Godhead is the sole Enjoyer and the *jiva* is the object of His exclusive enjoyment. Godhead is the only Lover, the *jīva* belongs to the category of His beloved. Godhead is the Possessor of power, the *jīva* is a particle of His obeying power.

The *jīva*, as an integrated particle of Krishna's power, can be truly cognisant of Krishna as the sole Proprietor of himself. But the *jīva* is not the direct plenary Power of Krishna, but a detached particle of His Plenary Power. The Integrated Plenary Power of Krishna is eternally and unswervingly obedient to Krishna and never loses sight of Him. The *jīva* can be cognisant of Krishna only, if he submits to function in the line of the direct Power under the latter's direction. Subordination to the direct Power of Krishna, in the case of the *jīva*, is the same as subordination to Krishna Himself Who is not directly cognisable by him. Sree Lakshmi Devi is the Plenary Power of Krishna. Through her Krishna manifests Himself to His dissociated particles of His

Power. The *jīva* may become a conscious partner in this process, if he subordinates his freedom of will, a gift of the Divinity, to the direction of the Will of Krishna, manifested for his guidance through Sree Lakshmi Devi. Sree Lakshmi Devi is the Consort of Sree Nārāyaṇa, and the *jīva*, in his proper nature, is the eternal servitor of Sree Nārāyaṇa under Sree Lakshmi Devi as a detached particle of Her Essence. This cannot be realised by the bound *jīva* till he wakes to his true nature and is thereby freed from all taint of mundane sensuous hankerings.

The marriage of Godhead, as every other Act of His, is identical with Godhead and as such is an object of our worship. The instinct of sexuality, that is so strong in all fallen *jīvas*, is the perverted reflection of the highest function of his real nature which seeks eternally to subordinate herself to Godhead through serving love. This spiritual impulse of serving love appears in bound *jīvas* in the unwholesome perverted form of lust seeking for its own gratification. This is, indeed, the worst of all the perversions appearing in this world and also the one that is the most difficult to get rid of. Man and woman in this world understand well enough the process of exploiting one another's lust for the reciprocal gratification of their senses. They choose to think gratuitously that, as God Himself has endowed them with the sexual impulse, it must, therefore, be also His intention that it is their duty to avail of the opportunity so mercifully provided. Moderate and well-considered sexuality thus comes to be wrongly regarded as a part and parcel of our proper nature and the institution of marriage for the carnal purpose is looked upon as providing the convenient and proper conditions for the exercise of this legitimate God-given impulse. The idea of a human being without any sexual weakness hence comes to be regarded with the greatest suspicion, being considered as either an impossibility or an abnormality.

But as a matter of fact carnal sexuality is not any impulse of our higher nature. It is a hankering for material enjoyment which can, by its nature, only gratify or disgust the material body and mind which have no substantive kinship with the soul. The corresponding pure spiritual impulse is completely free from the

desire of any selfish enjoyment. Our soul possesses spiritual senses which abstain from seeking their own gratification by a spontaneous tendency. They want to provide, and not to intercept, for themselves, all enjoyments for the Divinity. This service on the spiritual plane has no grossness or impurity which we, from our experience of the corresponding material process, associate with the object of carnal marriage.

The marriage of individual souls with Godhead is the establishment of unreserved spiritual reciprocal communion with the Divinity which is confusedly reflected in an unwholesome and inverted form in the sexual impulse of this world. The realisation of the most intimate spiritual communion is the fulfilment of the same spiritual impulse. The pursuit of sexual gratification of oneself is the *obstacle* in the way of such realisation and is, in fact: the greatest punishment that is suffered by the *jīva* by reason of his desire for enjoyment.

God does not accept the carnal sentiment, which is the worst form of aversion to Godhead, an act of personal disloyalty to the sole Enjoyer of all the spiritual senses of the *jīva* whose highest function consists in serving the Lord with all his spiritual senses. This spiritual service is available to the *jīva*, only if he happens to be in the state of perfect subordination to Godhead under the unconditional direction of Sree Lakshmi Devi, the Plenary Power Who is the Eternal Consort of the Lord. Sree Nārāyaṇa communes directly with Sree Lakshmi Devi and the latter carries out the Divine Will in an infinity of ways. The *jīva* is enabled to commune with Godhead as a particle of the gratuitous extension of the Divine process by submitting to be an humble agent of Sree Lakshmi Devi Who is entitled to impart to him, for the purpose, a particle of the pure impulse by which She ever serves Her sole Lord. This is the most intimate reciprocal communion, or spiritual marriage, of the *jīva* with the Divinity. Those, who cherish the marriage of Lakshmi and Nārāyaṇa, are by such devotion freed from the fell delusion of carnal sexuality on the attainment of the reciprocal spiritual communion with Divinity, which is the very highest form of service for the *jīva*. The fallen *jīva* is prepared to admit, at any rate in practice, the

inexorable penal laws of physical Nature, but, with strange perversity, is viciously disposed to oppose as irrational the existence of the far more inexorable code of love that regulates the affairs of the spiritual world.

But the Authority of Godhead is no less Absolute in the realm of spirit than it is in this prison-house of the physical world. The scientists try to understand, without questioning their *rationale*, the absolute potency, or authority, of the laws of this material universe. It is necessary to carry the same rational attitude into all enquiries regarding the spiritual world where, however, the laws of this physical world cannot prevail. The scientific spiritual method for attaining to the knowledge of the spiritual world, should, therefore, by strict analogy, also possess the following order of development, *viz.*, (1) actual perception of the spiritual world, (2) gathering of spiritual experience, (3) analysis of such experience, (4) acquisition of right conduct by assimilated knowledge. As the spiritual realm happens to be wholly unknown to us, we must be disposed to take the help of the experience of those who have access to it, if we hope to have even the initial working knowledge of its conditions during this short span of human life. All this is in strict analogy with the method of empiric science.

On the very day that Sree Gaursundar met Lakshmi Devi, a Brähmana match-maker (match-making by the way was then an honoured office as it should be) who bore the name of Banamāli Āchāryya, providentially made his appearance before Sachi Devi. The Brähmana, after making his obeisance to mother Sachi, accepted a seat which was cordially offered by her. Thereafter Banamāli Āchāryya broached his proposal: 'It was high time for her to think about the Marriage of her Son. Sree Ballabha Āchāryya, who also lived at Nabadwip, offered an unexceptionable connection as regards family, character and piety of life. His Daughter was the goddess Lakshmi Herself by the fame of Her beauty and disposition. Sachi Devi might accept this connection if she deemed it desirable.' Mother Sachi replied, 'My Son is a fatherless Boy. Let Him live and study. I am not thinking of any other thing just now.' The Brähmana felt utterly discouraged by this dry rejoinder and left with a heavy heart.

Banamāli Āchāryya fell in with the Lord on His way back from His Academy, Who embraced him by way of merriment. The Lord asked where he had been. The Brāhmaṇa said he had been to His mother to propose His Marriage. He could not understand why she did not take it at all seriously. On hearing of this the Lord became silent. He took His leave of him with a smile and returned home. He laughingly asked His mother why she had not received the Āchāryya in a gracious manner. Sachi was delighted on catching the hint from her Son and sent for the Brāhmaṇa on the day following. She then said to him, 'Settle as expeditiously as possible the affair that you mentioned yesterday. You have my full consent.'

Thereupon, taking the dust of the feet of Sachi, the Brāhmaṇa immediately set out for the home of Ballabha Āchāryya. When Banamāli Ghatak presented himself before Ballabha Āchāryya the latter received him with great respect. Having accepted a seat duly offered by Ballabha Āchāryya, Banamāli proceeded to ask him forthwith to fix an auspicious day for the marriage of his Daughter. 'The Son of Purandar Misra, by Name Bishwambhar, most learned and possessed of all good qualities, was the only eligible Bridegroom for his daughter. That was also the proposal which Banamāli had to make to him. He accordingly advises Ballabha Āchāryya to accept the same, provided, of course, it really commended itself to him.

Ballabha Āchāryya was filled with the greatest joy on receiving the proposal. He said that such a Son-in-law was to be had only by sheer good fortune. 'If Krishna is gracious to me or the goddesses Lakshmi and Gauri are pleased towards my daughter, only then, and not otherwise, I shall deserve to have such Son-in-law. Be pleased to put forth your best endeavour by all means to settle this affair with the least possible delay. But there is one point which I feel ashamed to mention. I am poor. I am unable to afford any dowry. It is only my daughter whom I shall give away and five myrobalans as her dowry. This is my request to you. You are to obtain their assent to this.' On hearing these words of Ballabha Āchāryya, the Ghatak felt a deep joy at the success of his mission and, coming back to Sachi, delivered to her the

happy news and asked her to fix an auspicious day for the ceremony. All friends of the family were filled with gladness on hearing the happy tidings and applied themselves assiduously to make every preparation for the due solemnization of the Nuptials of Sree Lakshmi and Sree Nārāyaṇa.

The preliminary (*adhibās*) ceremony was duly performed on an auspicious day, to the accompaniment of dance, song and a great variety of music. The Brāhmaṇas recited the Veda on all sides. Nimāi took His seat in the centre of the gathering. The friends and Brāhmaṇas performed this ceremony of betrothal by making offerings of perfumes and garlands to the Lord. The Brāhmaṇas were specially pleased, being treated to excellent perfumes, sandal-paste, betel and garlands. Ballabha Āchāryya came over to the home of Sachi and, having duly performed the same rite, returned with a joyous heart to his residence.

Rising early next morning the Lord bathed, gave away alms and honoured the *Manes* with due worship. There was a great jubilation of dance, song and music. On all sides there arose a mighty tumult, amidst shouts of 'give and take.' There was a multitudinous gathering of loyal matrons, well-wishers, friends, Brāhmaṇas and good people. Mother Sachi joyfully offered to the ladies, who were present, fried rice, plantain, vermillion, betel and oil. The gods and their consorts assuming human forms merrily assembled to witness the Marriage of the Lord. Ballabha Āchāryya also performed the worship of the gods and departed ancestors in the customary manner.

At the hour of twilight, in an auspicious moment, the Lord set out in marriage procession to the house of Ballabha Misra. No sooner did the Lord arrive at the residence of Misra, the minds of Misra and all his family were filled with a boundless joy. Misra with due respect and a glad heart helped his Son-in-law to the Bridegroom's Seat. He then brought out his daughter Lakshmi, decked in all Her ornaments, to the Presence of the Lord. The people began to shout the Name of Hari. They lifted Lakshmi Devi from the ground and carried Her on their shoulders through the function of perambulating the Lord seven times. Then,

after making Her obeisance to Him, Lakshmi stood before the Lord with the palms of Her hands joined in the attitude of supplication. Then the Two threw flowers at Each Other, and Both Lakshmi and Nārāyana were very much pleased. Lakshmi then placed a beautiful garland at the Feet of the Lord and, making obeisance, made the formal surrender of Herself. The crowd thereupon raised a paean of triumph on all sides, singing with many voices the Name of Hari so that no other sound could be heard. The holy rite of beholding Each Other's Face was next performed in the same manner. Then the Lord was seated with Lakshmi on His Left Side. The Lord was in the first bloom of youth, surpassing the god of love in beauty, by Whose Side Lakshmi now took Her seat. The beauty and joy that manifested themselves in the house of Misra no one has power to describe.

Thereafter Ballabha sat down to the function of giving away his Daughter. It seemed as if Bhismaka himself had re-appeared in this world. After robing the Body of the Lord with rich clothing, garlands and sandal-paste, the best of Brāhmaṇas washed His Lotus Feet, by Whose adoration Brāhmā, his prime ancestor, had been enabled to create the world. He then bestowed his Daughter in Marriage in due form. The Brāhmaṇa was immersed in the sea of bliss. It was now the turn of the matrons who duly performed the customary rites of the family.

The Lord passed the night in the house of Ballabha Āchāryya. On the following day He set out for His own home in the company of Lakshmi. All the people rushed out to have a Sight of the Lord as He was taken home on the shoulders of men, in a *dolā*, with Lakshmi seated by His Side. Lakshmi and Nārāyana were both richly decorated with perfumes, garlands, ornaments, crowns, sandal-paste and collyrium. All the people praised Them, as they caught a glimpse of the Divine Pair. The ladies were specially affected by the Sight. That fortunate Maiden must have long worshipped Hara and Gauri with Her heart's best devotion. Could such Husband be obtained by a girl except through extraordinary good luck? Some said that the Bridegroom and Bride seemed to be Hara and Gauri themselves. Some said, 'They were Indra and Sachi, or Rati and Madana.' Some said, 'They were Lakshmi

and Nārāyana.' A group of ladies declared them to be ' Seeta and Rama, shining with incomparable Beauty, seated together on the *dolā*.' Thus said all those ladies. They beheld Lakshmi and Nārāyana with an auspicious intent. In this manner the Lord returned Home at night-fall with the tumult of dance song and music.

Then Sachi Devi accompanied by the Brāhmaṇa matrons, with great joy, led her Daughter-in-law into the house. She satisfied all the Brāhmaṇas and the dancers and musicians by lavish gifts of money, clothing and sweet words. We have it on the authority of Thākūr Brindāvandās that those who listen to this holy narrative of the Lord's Marriage are completely freed from the bondage of this world.

As Sree Lakshmi Devi took Her place by the Side of the Lord, the Home of Sachi glowed with a transcendent radiance. Sachi noticed, always both inside and outside the house, a wonderful flaming brilliance which could not, however, be definitely located. She sometimes saw a blazing tongue of fire by the side of her Son; but as she turned to see again, it had vanished. She experienced off and on the fragrance of the lotus flower. Her amazement reached its climax and made her thoughtful. Mother Sachi mused, 'I understand the cause of it. Lakshmi abides in this Maiden. For this reason I perceive the Light and the Fragrance of the Lotus. There is now also no pinch of the poverty of the bygone days. Ever since this Lakshmi, my Daughter-in-law, came into the house, wealth in every form has been pouring in from all sides in a most unaccountable manner.' Mother Sachi often spoke in this strain. The Lord still chose to remain unmanifest. No one can understand the Will of God or how He sports at any time. When God does not make Himself known even Lakshmi Herself cannot know. This is testified by all the Scriptures, by the Vedas and the Purāṇas, that he alone can know the Supreme Lord whom He Himself favours.

I have retained the actual words of Thākūr Brindāvandās in describing the Marriage of Sree Gaursundar with Sree Lakshmi Devi. The Activities of Sree Chaitanya are not like those of mortal men. They were manifested in this world for the purpose

of healing the disease of mortality by Their contemplation. Most fallen souls, who are denizens of this world, like nothing better than marrying and giving in marriage. It may be supposed that the detailed narrative of the Marriage of Sree Chaitanya has been recorded by His devotee to serve as a model to be followed by the fallen *jivas* and as sanctioning the institution of marriage itself for ensuring spiritual progress. Such a conclusion would also be most acceptable to those who are disposed to find a religious sanction for carnality.

But the associates of Sree Chaitanya have cautioned us in unmistakable terms against *imitation* of the conduct of Sree Chaitanya. The Marriage of Sree Chaitanya is not a carnal affair. It is not to be understood as the glorification of the mundane institution of marriage. If Sree Chaitanya is regarded as a mortal, His Marriage will naturally be considered as an affair like that of man and woman of this world. Those who choose to think in this way are of course free to follow the dictate of their empiric judgment. Only the associates and true followers of Sree Chaitanya, who have recorded the true meaning of the Events of His Career for the benefit of humanity and who have acquired the eligibility to be heard, by fully acting up to their professions, require us to forget *tentatively* the stubborn insinuations of our worldly experience which is bound to fail utterly to give us the knowledge of the reality of which we stand in such urgent need.

The details of the Marriage of Sree Gaursundar should be listened to from the lips of *sādhus*, i.e., of those who are wholly devoted to the exclusive service of Godhead. God is the sole Proprietor of our senses. When our senses are directed Godward, they lose their grossness engendered by their wrong employment on subjects of this world. If the spiritual instinct, corresponding to sexuality, could be directed towards Godhead, it would be realised as the spiritual impulse of love. So long as it deliberately courts its stultification by directing itself to non-God for support, it finds itself stranded on this unwholesome mundane plane. Lust is the perversion of love into a loathsome mundane entity due to its adulterous and perverted application amounting to a suicidal

crime against its own nature. In other words, when the faculty of amorous love is exercised by the soul, who is free from all mundane hankering towards the All-holy, it is love. Once this change of direction is really established, the substantive existence of the spiritual function corresponding to lust is realised on the automatic elimination of all mundane unwholesomeness. The spiritual function possesses perfectly wholesome nature and permanent substantive existence. The corresponding mundane function is devoid of both these essential characteristics. This is altogether inconceivable to the materialised mind.

The perception of the associated correlatives of inferiority and superiority, grossness and wholesomeness, evil and good, smallness and greatness etc. is the inevitable concomitant of our gross sensuous experience. God reserves the right of appearing to any and every entity as He pleases. And as soon as He chooses to favour an entity by His acceptance of his service, he is instantly freed from all grossness by such acceptance. The marriage-rite of a Bengali Brāhmaṇa has nothing inherently spiritual in it. But it is nevertheless an Eternal Activity for God to accept those rites and all rites, and by such Acceptance they are necessarily freed from all grossness and imperfection. Those, who do not want to enter fully into this real meaning of the Activities of the Divinity when They become visible in this world, earn only damnation by their mis-reading of the Scriptures.

The marriage-rite of a Bengali pseudo-Brāhmaṇa is categorically different from that of Sree Chaitanya for the reasons suggested above. The former produces and aggravates the malady of carnality. Such a result cannot be avoided by merely choosing to imagine that the sensuous affair is sanctioned by the Divine; because the Divine Marriage is located wholly above the plane of the conditioned soul. The sight or contemplation of the Divine Event re-acts on the conditioned soul, if he does not oppose the process by the persistent abuse of his freedom of will in the matter of sexuality. The result of such re-action is spiritually beneficial. The non-spiritual, even in the case of the votary of intangible abstractions, can only re-act on the non-spiritual and complicate the non-spiritual condition. The actual Existence and redeeming Potency of the

Divinity is unconsciously, but none the less decisively, denied by the idealist whose vision is completely deluded by the subtler potency of matter by reason of such attitude. Gaursundar is Godhead Himself. The contemplation of His Marriage-Rite, in its minutest details with an enlightened serving faith elicited by the instructions of the good preceptor, is bound to re-act on the fettered soul and free him from the bondage of carnality.

We are servants of Krishna. We are not masters of anything. Sree Lakshmi Devi is the Eternal Consort of Sree Gaursundar and serves Him as Consort. Sree Gaursundar is the Lord of Sree Lakshmi Devi. The *jīva* cannot be the Lord of any entity. The marriage institution of this world establishes a mundane connection between two material bodies inside which two offending *jīvas* are imprisoned. Having lost all consciousness of his real, *i.e.*, spiritual nature, the bound *jīva*, supposing his physical body to be identical with himself, falls under the power of the physical senses and considers himself as an enjoyer of sensuous pleasure accruing from such reciprocation of bodily and mental activities. The sexual relationship in the flesh is the perverted caricature by material symbols of the state of intimate spiritual communion of the individual soul with God in his pure natural state. The institution of marriage is sinful if the *jīva* regards it as a means of his sensuous gratification, as such amorous activities necessarily tend to prolong the bondage of matter and consequent forgetfulness of Godhead. The bodily marriage is harmful and unnatural. In the conditioned state it may not be always possible to avoid the married state in a natural way. But it is always possible even for a married couple to honestly try to steer clear of carnality. They are enabled to do this if they learn the nature of the real connubial connection, which is possible only in the Supreme Lord, from the lips of *sādhus*. Being thus enlightened by the mercy of *sādhus*, one is enabled to realise the true meaning of *Shāstric* provisions in regard to marriage that are intended to unite individual souls to God by the gradual but complete elimination of all carnal desire. Sometimes also a self-realised soul (*sādhu*) may adopt the married state in order to serve God by setting an example to fallen *jīvas* embodying the *shāstric* ideal of the married state. But nothing is gained by lifeless imitation of

the external conduct of such a person. It is necessary first of all to seek for true enlightenment at the feet of the guileless and sincere servants of the Lord. To the understanding, enlightened by the causeless mercy of *sādhus*, the real significance of the *sacrament* of marriage discloses itself. Conditioned souls have no right of entry into the spiritual realm until and unless they are enabled to realise the necessity of submitting to the purgatorial process of the cleansing of all worldly dirt by the unconditional service of the true devotees of Godhead.

The ladies of the neighbourhood gave vent to their opinion that the Bride and Bridegroom were no other than Lakshmi and Nārāyana; or, in other words, They were regarded as Godhead and His Eternal Consort. This was also fully applicable to the case. But we should be on our guard against the utterly profane carnal sentimentalism that proposes to regard every newly married pair as resembling Lakshmi and Nārāyana, or, for the matter of that, which proposes to regard *any jīva* as the husband or wife of another by his spiritual nature. The mundane relation of husband and wife is of the flesh, being the grossly perverted eternal relation that unites *mediately* the individual soul, in his state of grace, with the Fountain head of All-existence through his willing, unconditional submission to the guidance of the plenary Power. It is sheer folly to confound the one with the other.

Similarly those are also equally deluded who choose to regard the issue born of such bodily union as being on a level with Divine Gopāla. Such people affect to be innocently unconscious of the eternal difference that separates this nether world, its concerns and the conditioned souls from the Divinity and His Own. The *jīva* commits a great offence against Godhead when he marries another *jīva* for the practice of carnality, and a sacrilege when he chooses to regard such bodily union as Divinely ordained. The soul of the *jīva* can be neither wife nor husband in the worldly sense. He has nothing to do with this world. The flesh and all its concerns are the snare which entraps the soul who is disinclined to serve Godhead and seeks, in lieu of the spiritual and absolutely pure service of the Lord, his own selfish enjoyment. So long as the desire for such enjoyment retains possession of the mind of the *jīva*, he is

apt to turn a deaf ear to the Word of God always warning him from without and within against the seductions of the flesh. To such a person the world appears to be a place of legitimate sensuous enjoyment. When such a person also sets up as a preacher of the Word of God, he is bound to mis-interpret the Scriptures in order to make them tally with his own sensuous outlook and often carries this mis-interpretation to such lengths that he feels no scruple in representing his sensual activities as being identical with the service of God on the ground that they are also applauded by all other sinners. It is these pseudo-preachers who also declare the consummation of carnal marriage between one *jīva* and another as identical with the institution sanctioned by the Scriptures. Let us beware of these pseudo-preachers who are infinitely worse than even the proverbial wolves in sheep's clothing. One should on principle refuse to be instructed in the Word of God by a worldling who deceives himself and others by putting on the holy garb of a servant of God, and should avoid the society of such a person as that of an open enemy of Godhead. Toleration of such persons is the worst cruelty to oneself as well as to the person himself, being an offence at the Feet of the Lord and against the express teaching of all Scriptures. These hypocritical teachers of the religion are worse than even the rankest of atheists by profession.

CHAPTER X

PROFESSOR LIFE—(*Contd.*)

THE figure of Sree Gaur-sundar as professor (*adhyāpaka*) has been described in some detail by Thākur Brindāvandās. He was constantly surrounded by a host of admiring pupils. He was extremely proud of His learning and took a particular pleasure in ridiculing and exposing the ignorance of everybody. He cared for nothing except His books. He had an extraordinarily Beautiful Appearance and was in the bloom of His Youth. Grace and Beauty marked His every Limb. His Hands reached down to the Knees. His wide Eyes resembled the *petals* of the lotus flower. His Lips were always tinged by betel. He wore the most handsome clothing.

This beautiful, young, arrogant Scholar's teaching was also unique in character. No savant of the then greatest centre of learning of India presumed to understand it really. The quondam teacher of Sree Gaur-sundar, fortunate Gangādās Pandit, was the only exception. The Lord opened out the store of His Learning freely to His old teacher. Worldly-minded people praised the Scholar and said that the parents of such a Son were the possessors of the richest of all treasures. To the woman-kind this insolent Scholar appeared in the likeness of the god of love himself. To the atheists He was terrible as Death. To the Pandits He was like a second Brihaspati by His wonderful learning. Different persons viewed Him in a different light in accordance with their particular standards of the highest worth.

But there was one group of people who did not share this general admiration of the particularly well-dressed Teacher. This was the community of the Vaishnavas. They were utterly disappointed to find no trace of inclination for Krishna in this fascinating Youth Whose great learning, they knew well, would be of no avail to save Him from the clutches of ignorance and

death. They did not hesitate to speak out to His Face, 'Why dost Thou waste Thy time in the delusions of learning?' The Lord laughed as He listened to the words of His servants and replied, 'I am fortunate in that you take the trouble to teach it to Me.'

There was at this time a considerable community of Vaishnavas resident in Nabadwip, as the place offered special facilities for study and the prospect of living close to the holy Ganges. Among them was a large body of devotees from Chattagrām (Chittagong). In the afternoon the Vaishnavas assembled in the Academy of Sree Advaita Achāryya. They met there regularly to discourse about Krishna. It was a gathering of persons, all of whom were from their birth without the least attachment for the things of this world. In fact they were not of this world at all. They had been born in different parts of the country and were brought together at Nabadwip by the Will of Godhead.

Mukunda sang the *Kirtana* of Hari to this assembly of the pure devotees. All the Vaishnavas were pleased with Mukunda whose song had the quality of melting their hearts. The joy of the assembled devotees, as Mukunda would begin to sing, became so intense that it expressed itself in strange ways. Some wept. Some laughed. Some began to dance. Some rolled on the ground, forgetful of their apparel. Some donned their cloth tightly and shouted challenge of defiance. Some ran up to Mukunda and clasped his feet. So wonderful, indeed, was the effect on those Vaishnavas of the *Kirtana* of Krishna sang by Mukunda. His song produced the highest bliss and made the Vaishnavas forget all cause of grief.

The Lord was specially pleased with Mukunda, in His heart, for this reason. He would tease Mukunda whenever He chanced to meet him, by asking him to solve logical riddles. This led to prolonged controversies. Mukunda was well-versed in the science of Logic and made use of every form of argument in holding his ground against the onslaughts of Sree Gaursundar. But he was always beaten in the long run. Nimāi put these riddles also to Sribās Pandit and other devotees. They were very much afraid of His puzzles and always scattered at His Approach. The

devotees had no taste for any discourse except regarding Krishna, and Nīmāi never proposed anything except riddles of dry logic. No one could solve His puzzles and He mercilessly exposed all who broke down.

One day as the Lord was passing along the highway in the company of His pupils with every manifestation of the vanity of a pedantic scholar, Mukunda, who was going to the Ganges for his bath, saw the Lord from a distance and immediately took to his heels. Noticing this the Lord said to His servant Govinda, ‘Why did the rascal bolt on seeing Me?’ Govinda did not understand the reason of Mukunda’s conduct. He suggested that he might have had some business of his own. The Lord said that the real reason was his belief that a Vaishnava should never greet a person who is averse to Godhead. Then the Lord spoke in the hearing of all, ‘Let him keep aloof for the present. I will see how long he will avoid Me in this manner. I will become such a good Vaishnava that even Siva and Brahmā will dance attendance at My doorsteps. Those very people, who now flee at My Approach, will then sing My praise.’ He said this to His students laughingly as He was returning home in their company.

It was, indeed, a most distressing period for the devotees of Nabadwip. The whole of Nadiā was mad with the taste of riches and sons. The people launched into invectives as soon as they heard of *kirtana*. They, indeed, said openly that it was only a device for filling the belly. They were specially wroth against Sribās and his three brothers.

The arguments they used against the Vaishnavas have been preserved by Thākur Brindāvandās. ‘Was there any justification in dancing in their saucy and unmannerly way, giving up the method of intellectual communion?’ ‘I myself have read the Bhāgavata many times over, but I do not find in it any method of dancing and crying.’ ‘I cannot get any sleep after dinner on account of Sribās and his brothers. Is it not pious enough if one calls upon Krishna with a subdued voice? Is there any unavoidable necessity of dancing; singing and shouting?’ This was the universal attitude of all non-Vaishnavas. They talked and jeered in this manner whenever they met the Vaishnavas.

When the devotees used to feel very much depressed at such treatment by the people, Sree Advaita Āchāryya would repeat his assurance that he would *destroy* all those atheists, as Sree Krishna would be with them in a very short time in the town of Nabadwip itself. The words of Advaita dispelled all their sorrows and the Vaishnavas kept up the blessed *Kirtana* of Krishna with the greatest joy. Such was the state of affairs at Nabadwip when Lord Vishwambhar was deeply occupied with His secular studies.

So the Lord Himself, the Teacher of the whole world, by His Conduct as well as Instruction, was apparently pursuing a mode of life which was indistinguishable from that of the average worldly people. Would we be justified in blaming the pseudo-teachers of the Vaishnava religion of these days who, professing to *follow* the example of Sree Gaur-sundar, lead a life of luxurious ease with their wives and children? If Sree Gaur-sundar chewed betel should they not also do the same *as in duty bound?* If Professor Nimāi dressed faultlessly, poked fun at the Vaishnavas and devoted Himself exclusively to secular studies, why should such innocent amenities of a householder's life be forbidden to His followers?

The questions no doubt suggest their own answer. In the case of Sree Gaur-sundar all this was absolutely proper. To the true devotee of Godhead everything is handy and fit, as he knows their use for the service of Godhead. The external conduct of the devotee derives its value for worldly observers from this internal quality. If a woman is really chaste, she can do nothing that is improper. If she is really unchaste, she can do nothing that is proper, not even by mimicking the external conduct of any chaste lady. Such mimicry is in no way different from unchastity and is often the more dangerous form of wickedness. A thing can be but itself. External conduct is always deceptive, *being external*. By imitating the external Conduct of Sree Gaur-sundar that was visible to mundane observers at any period of His Activities, nothing but the direst offence is reaped. The Relation of the Lord to His Consort, to His pupils, to His devotees is misunderstood if we choose to misunderstand them by refusing to listen to those who are acquainted with the real Nature of Nimāi. Even the Vaishnavas

confessed, when they came to know Him later as He really is, that they also had once utterly misunderstood Him and His Activities, before He Himself manifested the real nature of them in their more explicit form to their higher consciousness.

The full view regarding the Activities of Sree Gaursundar is attainable only if they are regarded as the Pastimes of Godhead Himself. Sree Gaursundar is identical with Sree Krishna. Those, who ignore this by misunderstanding His Role as Devotee, necessarily fail to obtain the adequate view of His Doings. The want of this knowledge apparently led even the Vaishnavas themselves to deprecations of the external conduct of Sree Gaursundar at this period. They wished that He should become a devotee like themselves. This is the natural desire of all pure Vaishnavas in regard to non-Vaishnavas. The pursuit of secular studies in which Sree Gaursundar was wholly absorbed and the employment of His controversial powers on subjects other than Krishna were, therefore, condemned by those pure devotees as the abuse of His intellectual powers. It is instructive to find that those Vaishnavas were not under the delusion, which is so much cherished by the pseudo-Vaishnavas of these days, that the Conduct of Nimāi was that of the model servant of Godhead. They were right so far. They apparently erred in supposing that Sree Gaursundar was a Vaishnava and not Vishnu Himself. But subsequently also, when they knew the Lord by His grace, they did not, therefore, try to *imitate* the Conduct of Sree Gaursundar.

Secular studies and pursuits in their purely worldly sense are not only unnecessary but are positively harmful to the *jīva* in the state of bondage. The object and method of all non-spiritual activities is to be enabled thereby to acquire extended opportunities of selfish, material enjoyment, a *desideratum* which is foreign to the nature of the *jīva* in the State of Grace. Any act which is undertaken for securing one's own enjoyment ceases to have any reference to the service of the Lord Who is the Absolute Master, Proprietor and Enjoyer of everything. The pursuit of the knowledge of the things of this world with reference to ourselves as enjoyers of them is not the function of the pure soul. By all knowledge Godhead alone is properly served. The pursuit of secular know-

ledge is productive of spiritual well-being if it possesses this exclusive reference to Godhead both as regards its object and method.

The acceptance of this true principle does not destroy any value, it only removes our ignorance and fulfils the only real object of all knowledge. God certainly indwells all knowledge, but inaccessible to the conditioned soul. As soon as the conditioned soul is enabled to realise His Presence in all learning, his object and method of pursuing knowledge ceases to be secular and harmful. Sree Gaur-sundar was within His Rights in *accepting the service* of the goddesses of secular learning and of physical Nature, because He is their Lord and Proprietor. There could be no absence of Reference in the Reference Himself. But because Sree Gaur-sundar was pleased to exhibit the *Leccha* of pursuing secular knowledge for its own sake, those who are aware of His Divinity should not, with an inexcusable perversity of judgment, jump to the conclusion that His Conduct was intended to justify the apparently similar procedure of any *jivas*, if they happen to cherish the unnatural desire of becoming the masters or slaves of material Nature. God is always the Master even when He chooses to manifest His Divine Form in this unspiritual world. Even when the Lord *seems*, to the perverted judgment of fallen *jivas*, to be subject, like themselves, to the laws of physical Nature, He remains her Master none the less.

Even the devotees themselves failed to understand the Doings of the Lord at this period, although His conduct was appreciated by worldly people who supposed, in their disloyal delusion, that it resembled their own. This latter kind of appreciation was an unconscious offence against the Lord, while the depreciation of His Conduct by the devotees was not an offence, although it was an error, into which they fell by the Will of Godhead Himself, for the furtherance of His Pastimes.

Worldly people misunderstood the Conduct of both Sree Gaur-sundar and His devotees. They admired Sree Gaur-sundar for His great Qualities, for the Beauty of His Person and for His great Learning. They desired those things for themselves and could, therefore, appreciate them by the method of envy. The bound *jiva* wants to enjoy, to rule, to possess beauty and learning

for increasing his supposed power and scope of selfish enjoyment. Sree Gaur-sundar had all what they so wrongly desire. The worldly people regarded Him as the most successful of worldlings. They disliked the devotees, because they did not approve their worldliness. The mode of life of the devotees seemed in the eyes of those worldly people to be not merely bad, but ridiculous. It is not possible for worldly people to understand the ways of pure devotees; it is still less possible for them to understand the Ways of God Himself.

If we want to follow Sree Gaur-sundar we should in the first place have to know our real relationship to Him. In proportion as this knowledge of our relationship with Godhead is realised, we are in a position to understand His Ways. When Sree Gaur-sundar took to secular study, apparently for its own sake, His Purpose was to be merciful to the goddess of secular learning inside whose heart He ever dwells in the Form that is incomprehensible to the conditioned *jīva*; and, secondarily, to establish the principle, for the benefit of the fallen *jīvas*, that they should neither thoughtlessly imitate nor condemn the conduct of the pure devotee, nor suppose that he is ever liable to error by reason of his youth, or apparent ignorance of the concerns of this world, or even *apparent devotion* to them. The efforts of the servants of God are not governed by the instinct of so-called self-preservation, or for adjustment to the phenomenal environment, which is apt to dominate the activities of fallen *jīvas*. The devotees never do anything except under the pure impulse of serving Krishna. It is not altogether impossible for us, even while we continue in the sinful state, to admit this.

Regarding Sree Mukunda Datta, we have the hint in Sree Chaitanya Charitāmrita that 'Lord Chaitanya Himself dances in the *kirtana* of Mukunda.' Mukunda made his appearance in Chittagong. In *Gauraganoddesadipikā* he is identified with Madhukantha, the singer of Braja. We have seen already that Mukunda Datta was a fellow student of Sree Chaitanya in the Academy of Sree Gangādās Pandit. Mukunda was a most brilliant scholar and Chaitanya found great delight in putting to him the most difficult riddles of Logic. Mukunda read the *Bhāgavatam*

to Sree Chaitanya after the Latter's return from Gayā. When Sree Chaitanya danced in the yard of Sribās Pandit, Mukunda sang the *kirtana*. He accompanied Sree Chaitanya to Katwā on the occasion of His Acceptance of Renunciation (*sannyās*), and subsequently followed Him to Puri. He used to come every year to Puri from Bengal to visit the Lord, in the company of His other devotees.

The godless people of that time objected to the *kirtana* on the ground that dancing and singing with a loud voice are not the method of worship recommended by the *Bhāgavatam*. This is true in regard to the insincere performances of the *pseudo*-Vaishnavas. But the *Bhāgavatam* frequently mentions the manifestation of genuine spiritual perturbations in the forms of laughter, weeping, dancing, singing, etc., in an unaccountable form in the true devotees of Krishna. The people were angered by the loud *kirtana* of Sribās and his brothers for the ostensible reason that it stood in the way of their sleep, etc.

Those, who profess to be seekers of worldly merit (*pūṇya*) for its enjoyable rewards, naturally misunderstand the efforts of pure devotees who practise devotion to Godhead, for benefiting all persons by inclining them to the service of Godhead which is obstructed by their hankerings after worldly enjoyment. But those godless people supposed, in their ignorance, that the dancing and singing of the Vaishnavas, which are performed because they are pleasing to Krishna, are a crude and inferior form of worship of which the lonely individualistic method was regarded as the highest. This insolence of judgment, which is the necessary and invariable concomitant of simulation of worship by conditioned souls, proved its own terrible punishment and effectively prevented those scoffers from listening to the unalloyed *kirtana* of Hari that was nightly performed within the reach of their hearing, for the benefit of all, by Sribās Pandit and his brothers, in the teeth of the violent, uncalled-for, suicidal opposition of all those self-complaisant worldly egotists.

While Nimāi was thus wholly immersed in the pleasures of study, Sree Isvara Puri came to Nabadwip and presented himself at the house of Advaita. He was clad in the garb of an ascetic

(*sannyāsin*) of one staff; and so no one suspected him to be a Vaishnava. But Advaita noticed the glow of his extraordinary spiritual energy and recognised him as a theistic (Vaishnava) *sannyāsin*. No sooner did Mukunda begin a song about Krishna in the gathering of the Vaishnavas at Advaita's, the ocean of natural love for Krishna in the pure heart of Puri was deeply stirred. Presently all the Vaishnavas came to learn that the *sannyāsin*, who loved Krishna so deeply, was no other than Sree Isvara Puri, the loved disciple of Sree Mādhavendra Puri.

One day as Sree Gaursundar was returning home after teaching, He accidentally met Sree Iswara Puri on His way and did obeisance to him, as is the duty of every householder towards a *sannyāsin*. Sree Isvara Puri was struck by the wonderfully beautiful Appearance of Sree Gaurāṅga and enquired Who He was and what subject He taught. Nimāi with due deference answered the questions of Sree Isvara Puri, and, with great respect and cordiality, invited him to accompany Him to His House and accept the alms of his day's meal there.

Sachi Devi cooked the offering for Krishna and gave it in alms to Sree Isvara Puri. After meal Sree Isvara Puri engaged with Nimāi Pandit in discourse regarding Krishna and in course of the talk manifested his overwhelming love for Krishna. Sree Isvara Puri spent several months at Nabadwip at the house of Sree Gopināth Āchāryya, sister's husband of the famous Sārba-bhaumia Bhaitāchāryya of Vidyānagar. · Nimāi Pandit went to Vidyānagar in the evenings to pay His respects to Sree Isvara Puri at the conclusion of His day's teaching. Sree Isvara Puri was charmed with the love for Krishna of Sree Gadādhar Pandit who was spontaneously unattached to the world from infancy. Moved by a feeling of affection Sree Isvara Puri undertook to read to Gadādhar his own work, 'Sree Krishnaleelāmritam'.

One day Sree Isvara Puri asked Nimāi Pandit to correct any mistakes that He might detect in his book, promising to adopt any alterations that He might suggest. The Lord replied, 'that as the book contained the account of the Doings of Krishna and had been written by a pure devotee like Sree Isvara Puri, any person, who presumed to detect any fault in it, would certainly commit

a grave offence against Godhead. Whatever the external quality of the verses of a devotee might seem to be, Krishna is fully pleased thereby. There was no doubt about it. Any grammatical or other defects that may happen to be present in the language of the devotee are over-looked by Krishna Who is ever subdued by the homage of the heart and accepts nothing but pure love for Himself. If any one found fault with the language of a devotee, it only proved that the critic was devoid of the Grace of Krishna. There did not exist the person who would dare to find fault with the language used by a pure devotee like Puripāda to convey the tidings of Krishna.'

But Sree Isvara Puri continued to press his request that Nimāi Pandit might point out the defects of his book. In this manner Isvara Puri spent hours in discussing daily a variety of topics with Nimāi. One day after listening to a certain *shloka*, composed by Sree Isvara Puri, Nimāi Pandit said to him, by way of fun, that the verb in the said verse should have the form of *parasmaipada* and not of *ātmanepada*. Thereafter, when Nimāi Pandit next made His Appearance another day, Sree Isvara Puri told Him that he had been able to find out the grammatical authority in favour of his conjugation of the verb as *ātmanepada*. The Lord also, in order to enhance the greatness of His devotee, refrained from finding fault with this conclusion. Having passed some time in the pleasures of these learned pastimes in the company of Nimāi, Sree Isvara Puri started again on his wanderings in order to sanctify the *tirthas*, all over India, by his visit.

The above account of Sree Chaitanya's first meeting with His Guru is reproduced *verbatim* from Sree Chaitanya *Bhāgavata*. Sree Isvara Puri made his appearance in a Brāhmaṇa family of Kumārhatta (Hālishahar, on the E. B. Ry.). He was the most beloved disciple of Sree Mādhabendra Puri. In *Chaitanya-Charitāmrita* it is narrated (*Antya*, VIII, 26-29) how Sree Isvara Puri obtained the mercy of his Gurudeva, by his loyal service, who bestowed on his worthy disciple his own love for Krishna. The unique love of Sree Isvara Puri for Krishna, which was aroused in him in this manner, never left him.

Sree Isvara Puri wore the garb of a *sannyāsin* of one staff (the staff being the symbol of self-discipline). The assumption of the single staff is the practice of those *sannyāsins* who follow the *path* of *knowledge* to obtain the reward of the six-fold endeavours, viz., *sama* (*equanimity*), *dama* (*self-control*), *titikshā* (*endurance*), etc., by the study of the *Vedānta* and the other Scriptures. Those who follow the *path of fruitive works*, on attainment of the stage of *yati*, take to the triple-staff *sannyās* and wander about companionless in all directions. The Vaishnava *Sannyāsins*, discarding alike the desire for worldly enjoyment as well as renunciation of such enjoyment, engage in the exclusive service of Hari. In them, therefore, the twin renunciation of worldly enjoyment and renunciation of such renunciation, are simultaneously present. Their position is thus defined in Srimad *Bhāgavatam*, 'I shall cross the otherwise impassable ocean of ignorance by serving the Feet of Godhead by practising devotion to the Supreme Soul in the footsteps of the great sages (*rishis*) of old'.

The *rasa* (*i.e.* mellowing quality) of devotion to Krishna, in which Sree Isvara Puri was established by the mercy of Sree Mādhhabendra, transcends all other *rasas* (mellownesses) by its supreme excellence and complete perfection. The transcendental *rasas* may have the forms of (1) Brahman bliss, *i.e.*, the bliss of realising the transcendent *greatness* of Godhead, (2) the bliss of serving Godhead as a Person Who is Supreme Ruler of the material and spiritual worlds, and (3) the highest bliss of serving Godhead as Recipient of causeless loving devotion. The Object of worship, pointed to by the above three methods of spiritual service, has been called in the Scriptures the *Brahman*, *Sree Nārāyana* and *Sree Krishna* respectively. All these *rasas* (mellownesses) are located beyond the zone of operation of the triple qualities that permeate this material world which find their way even to *Kailāsa*, the abode of Siva.

The worthlessness of the worldly *rasas* (tasty liquid) is due to the existence of plurality of the objects of worship. In the spiritual realm, in Vishnu Who is Full, Indivisible, Pure Cognition, there is no possibility of such defects. In Krishna this spiritual

service attains its highest fulfilment. Sree Isvara Puri was loved by Krishna for his attachment to Sree Guru the best-beloved of Krishna. The author of Sree Chaitanya *Bhāgavata* says, 'that being most dearly loved by Krishna Sree Isvara Puri was necessarily kind to all *jivas* without distinction. Such universal kindness is never possible in those who do not serve Krishna.'

The unwillingness of Sree Gaurasundar to comply with the express request of Sree Isvara Puri to correct the defects of his book, is not a display of insincere civility which passes by the name of humility in this world. Krishna makes no difference between the highly skilled linguist and one who is ignorant of the alphabet. Krishna is ever more kind to him who possesses the greater inclination of service. Krishna, Who knows the inmost thoughts of our hearts, is never guilty of mistaken partiality. Pedantic scholars devoid of love for Krishna only prove their own real ignorance by trying to find defect in the language of devotees. The ignorance of such scholars is exposed at every step by the mercy of the Lord of the goddess of learning in order to wean them from their suicidal hostility to the devotees of Krishna. This also serves to keep their scholars' pride low. All such vanity is the outcome of ignorance of Krishna Who is the Truth Absolute. All sinfulness and unwholesomeness is due to ignorance of the Real Truth, in an aggravated form under the guise of pseudo-scholarship.

As Professor the Lord was wholly occupied with His studies, teaching and learned disputations. It was specially His practice to test the knowledge of all the teachers without exception. No Professor of Nabadwip ever came victoriously through his searching tests. No one was ever able to give a satisfactory answer to the questions put by Him. Although Nimbālī Pandit taught only *Vyākaraṇa*, which is a comparatively elementary subject, He showed very little deference to the most erudite Professors of that celebrated emporium of learning. He often passed with a triumphant bearing through all quarters of the town in the company of His students displaying the aggressive *nonchalance* of the perfectly self-conceited scholiast.

One day as Nimbālī Pandit was thus parading the town with
His students He met Mukunda on His way, quite by accident. The
Lord took him by the hand and said 'Why do you bolt at the very

sight of Me? I won't allow you to escape this time without being enlightened by you.' Mukunda thought within himself, 'I must beat Him to-day. His special and only *forte* is *Vyākaraṇa*. I shall silence Him by asking questions about *Rhetoric* that He may never again dare to be insolent to me'. Accordingly Mukunda began by deprecating *Vyākaraṇa* as the *Shāstra* fit only for children. 'Let us discourse instead about *Rhetoric*'. The Lord said Mukunda might select any subject he liked. Mukunda thereupon began to quote the most difficult passages from the whole range of poetical literature and asked Him to explain their rhetorical qualities.

Sree Gaurasundar impeached every metaphor and simile and all the rhetorical figures that were employed by those poets, and laid bare their defects in their minutest details. Mukunda was unable to justify his own select pieces against the penetrating criticisms of the Lord. The Lord then said laughingly, 'Go home to-day. Look up your books with more care. I shall again examine you to-morrow. You should come early.' Mukunda took the dust of the Feet of the Lord and departed. He was amazed and began to reflect, 'Is such learning possible in a mortal? There is no *Shāstra* of which He is not *perfect* Master. Gifted with such extraordinary genius, had He been only a devotee of Krishna, I would never leave His company even for the space of the fraction of a moment!'

Another day in course of His peripatetic wanderings the Lord of Vaikuntha fell in with Gadādhar. The Lord laughingly caught him by both hands and would not quit His hold of him. 'You study *Nyāya*. Tell me something about it'. Gadādhar replied, 'Ask any question'. The Lord said, 'Tell Me the characteristics of liberation (*mukti*)'. Gadādhar explained it in accordance with the *Nyāya Shāstra*. The Lord said that the subject was not really explained. The position which Gadādhar took up was that of the *Nyāya Shāstra* according to which 'liberation (*mukti*) ensues on the cessation or destruction of the extreme miseries.' The Lord of the goddess of learning found fault with the proposition, in many ways. There is no disputant who can hold his ground against Godhead. As a matter of fact there was not a single person in the whole of Nabadwip who could come up to the level of Nimai Pandit in learned disputation. Gadādhar now

thought of saving his face by flight. The Lord said, 'Gadādhar, go home to-day. I have more to learn from you. So do not fail to turn up early to-morrow'. Gadādhar made his obeisance and went off.

The Lord roamed through every part of the town in this manner. He was soon recognised by all persons as a most profound scholar. All people showed Him the highest respect whenever they chanced to meet Him. In the afternoon the Lord proceeded to the side of the Ganges with all His students and sat on the bank with demonstrative joy. The Beauty of the Person of the Lord, Who is served by Sree Lakshmi Devi herself, is unique in all the three worlds and inspired love in every beholder. The Son of Sachi sat there in the midst of His disciples and expounded the *Shāstras*. The Vaishnavas also gathered to the side of the Ganges in the evening and from a distance listened to the learned dissertations of the Lord. They experienced a mixed feeling of delight and sorrow as they thought within themselves that Nimāi Pandit was, indeed, Possessor of Learning and Beauty in an extraordinary measure. 'But if Krishna is not served thereby those qualifications are of no use whatever'. They also confided to one another the fact that they were in the habit of fleeing the very sight of Him for fear of His puzzling hoaxes. Some complained that He also did not allow them to escape so easily, often holding them up with the peremptory authority of a customs-officer. A few admitted that the Brāhmaṇa was possessed of superhuman powers and even suspected that it is a great personage (*mahā-purusha*) who had appeared in the world as Nimāi Pandit.

Although the Lord was constantly occupied in putting His puzzles to them, still the Sight of Him somehow always made those Vaishnavas feel very happy. They all realised that such learning was not to be found in man. But this discovery also added to their poignant grief that He did not serve Krishna. They implored one another to bless Him that He might thereby attain to love for Krishna. All the Vaishnavas would prostrate themselves to the Supreme Lord on the bank of the Ganges and all of them blessed Him, 'May it be Thy pleasure, O Krishna, that the Son of Jagannāth be maddened by love for Thee, giving up every other pleasure. May He constantly serve Thee with

loving devotion. Vouchsafe to us, O Krishna, Him as our companion.' The Lord, who knows the inmost thoughts of the heart, was aware of these wishes of the Vaishnavas. He made obeisance to them whenever He chanced to meet Sribās and any of the devotees. The Lord received the blessings of the devotees with His Head bent in submission. 'By the blessings of the Divinity,' say the Scriptures, 'love for Krishna is aroused'.

Some of them spoke to Him plainly, 'Why do You waste Your time in the delusions of learning?' Some said, 'Look here, Nimbā Pandit; what does it profit to be learned? Make haste to serve Krishna. Why do people read—It is surely for the purpose of learning devotion to Krishna? If that is missed what is the good of learning?' The Lord smiled and answered, 'It is a great good fortune for Me that such as you teach Me to regard devotion to Krishna as essential. It seems to My mind that One, Whose welfare is sought by such as you, is, indeed, most fortunate. I have a mind, after teaching My pupils for a little time longer to betake Myself to good Vaishnavas'. Thus saying the Lord, Who found Himself in the midst of His servants, would begin to laugh. No one could recognise Him by the force of His Own Power. By such ways did the Lord captivate the minds of all persons. There was no one who did not long for the Sight of Him.

The Lord's leisure was spent in these learned sessions by the side of the Ganges and wanderings through the different quarters of the town. The citizens greeted the Feet of the Lord with the greatest affection no sooner they caught Sight of Him. The ladies said, 'He is the god of love manifest. May woman be blessed by obtaining this Treasure at her every successive birth!' The learned regarded Him as the equal of the celestial sage Brihaspati; and the oldest of them made their obeisance to His Lotus Feet. To the *yogis*, He appeared to possess the realised body. The wicked viewed Him with terror, as the very Form of Death. If the Lord greeted a person only once he was thereby reduced to the condition of His prisoner and wore round his neck the collar of His love. Despite all the outspoken boastings of learning in which the Lord constantly indulged in the hearing of everybody, He was devotedly loved by all the people. Even the Yavanas

displayed a great liking for the Lord Who is by nature mercifully disposed to all without exception.

The Lord held His Academy in the suite of rooms that led into the residence of the fortunate Mukunda-Sanjaya. The Son of Sree Sachi Devi engaged there in defending and opposing different interpretations and in refuting, justifying and expounding in endless ways, the texts of the *sutras*. The fortunate Sanjaya-Mukunda with all his family and dependants felt themselves borne aloft on the high tide of a perennial joy, the cause of which they could not understand. After the day's triumphs of learning the Lord returned home in the evening. Thus did the Ruler of Vaikuntha choose to divert Himself with the exquisite pastimes of learning.

These accounts from the pen of Thākur Brindāvandās leave on the mind a most vivid impression of the realities of the Professor-life of Sree Chaitanya. He was evidently the universal Favourite of both Hindus and Mussalmans alike and was feared by all the impious scholars and evil-doers of every description. He was to all appearance the ideal Householder Teacher absorbed in His studies and teaching, which were of a wholly secular character. He was also a most formidable controversialist and had a wonderful faculty of detecting and exposing weak points in the views of the leading scholars of the famous University-town. The Beauty of His Person ravished every beholder. He showed the highest respect to the community of the Vaishnavas although they happened to be the objects of persecution and ridicule by all classes of the people. But He showed very little disposition to listen to their discourses regarding Krishna. On the contrary His genuine reverence for them did not prevent Him from putting even to them His puzzling riddles of Logic, the activity that He seemed to like best of all. So the Vaishnavas, although they had a genuine liking for Him, were grieved by His engrossing devotion to trivial secular studies and apparently utter indifference to Krishna. But they nevertheless prayed to Krishna to bestow on Him the fullest measure of love for Him that He might be a real Companion to them.

CHAPTER XI

UNRECOGNISED DIRECT MANIFESTATION.

FROM the point that we reached in the previous Chapter begin, with a staggering suddenness, the overwhelming series of direct Manifestations which are also at first necessarily unrecognised. The beginning of this change is thus described by Thākur Sree Brindāvandās. On a certain day the Lord under pretence of nervous break-down manifested all the perturbations of loving devotion. All on a sudden he began to utter words that are not of this world, rolled on the ground, laughed and smashed the house. He spoke with a deep, loud voice, girded up His loins and beat all persons whom He chanced to find about Him. His whole Body repeatedly attained the state of suspended animation and these fits of exclusiveness were so peculiar that they filled all beholders with terror. The friends came soon to learn the tidings of His supposed indisposition and turned up in a body. They busied themselves with devising the proper treatment of His mental derangement for so it appeared to them to be. Buddhimanta Khan and Mukunda-Sanjaya came to the House of the Lord with all members of their families. They applied to His Head medicinal oils, technically known as Vishnu and Nārāyana oils. Everyone offered the kind of help that suggested itself to him. But the Lord does everything by His own uncontrolled Will. How could He be cured by any external aid?

The Lord shivered in every Limb and gesticulated violently. His loud exclamations terrified *everybody*. The Lord said: 'I am the Lord of all the worlds; I uphold the world, whence My name is Vishwambhar. I am He, but no one knows Me.' With these words He begins to run at all the people to get hold of them. In this manner The Lord did disclose His own Lordly Nature under the guise of nervous malady. Yet no one understood, being prevented by His Power. Some held that He was possessed by a demon. Others opined that it was the doing of witches. Some

expressed the view that it was undoubtedly a case of madness as He manifested the symptom of talking incessantly. By these indications they failed to understand His real Nature, being thus deluded by the Power of the Lord. They applied various curative oils to His Head and kept His Body immersed in oil in a large vat. The Lord laughed without restraint as He lay afloat in oil, which gave all persons the impression that He had a very serious attack of the worst type of the disease.

Having by His Will sported for a while in this manner, the Lord regained His normal health by giving up the show of nervous malady. At this sudden recovery all people rent the sky with loud acclamations of the Name of Hari. In their joy, they made lavish gifts of clothing in such huge quantities that it baffles all calculation. All the people were gladdened by the tidings of the Lord's recovery. All said, 'May the great Pandit live for ever!' 'The Lord of Vaikuntha', observes Thākur Brindāvandās, 'made merry in this manner. Who has power to know Him if He does not make Himself known?'

These manifestations of spiritual perturbations described by Thākur Brindāvandās in the above passage, are liable to be misunderstood. They were manifested by Sree Gaursundar under the form of the symptoms of nervous malady. Those who want to understand everything in terms of ordinary mundane experience and are not prepared to admit the existence, or possibility of existence, of the super-mundane, naturally reject the clear testimony of the Vaishnava writers to the effect that the spiritual perturbations are not physical phenomena at all even though they necessarily appear as such to the clouded vision and understanding of all mortals.

The principle has already been discussed elsewhere. It applies to the whole range of spiritual manifestations. The Name Krishna, the Remains of the food tasted by Krishna, the Objects used in the worship of Krishna—such as buildings, utensils, etc., the *body and mind* of the person who worships Krishna, are, *every one of them*, spiritual entities, the consensus of opinion of all empiricists to the contrary notwithstanding. It is a difference of view which separates those, who admit the existence of the eternal and unbridgeable gulf that divides the spiritual from the material,

from those who consciously or unconsciously hold that the two are identical. The latter form the large and influential body of the anti-transcendentalists and psilanthropists.

But the real transcendentalists possess an intelligible and consistent theistic philosophy. They believe in the actual substantive existence of the super mundane plane which never submits to the inspection of the material senses. The spiritual manifestations belong to the transcendental plane. They have to be carefully distinguished on the one hand from all worldly phenomena and on the other from dishonest or misguided exhibitions of the pseudo-transcendentalist. Everyone is free to believe or not believe a thing or a proposition. But no clear thinker would claim the right of misrepresenting, or deliberately misunderstanding, a proposition or an occurrence. The materialists and pseudo-transcendentalists have deliberately misunderstood and mis-stated the accounts of the Spiritual Scriptures. This is not honest blunder.

It was this possibility, nay the certainty of deliberate misunderstanding on the part of all disbelievers and pseudo-believers, that led Sree Gaursundar to devise this method, for saving them from the offence of blasphemy, of disguising the *sātvika* manifestations of spiritual love under the form of the symptoms of a disease with which they have the closest external similarity. The opinion of those, who hold the view that the so-called *sātvika* manifestations are also themselves due to the diseased condition of the brain, does not carry any more weight than deliberate misrepresentations. No physician can understand the real cause of the appearance or cessation of the phenomenon known as disease. But it is unfortunately only a small number of doctors who suspect and allow for this great insufficiency of the grounds of their knowledge in opining about bodily manifestations of any kind. Medical science is no less subject to the fundamental limitations of sensuous empiricism than its sister sciences. No science in the modern sense of the term would deserve a serious hearing unless it either helped the codification or widening of our stock of worldly experience.

Considered from this point of view the science of medicine has no jurisdiction over spiritual manifestations, and this ought to be more clearly recognised acted upon and proclaimed by the leading scientists of to-day than they are always accustomed to

do. They are, of course, free to criticize the methods and experiences of the Absolutists. It is only when they are really unable to understand spiritual matters after proper endeavour that such criticism has its real use in exposing the vagaries or opposition of insincere persons and thereby preventing mischief from that quarter. But let them not forget their legitimate function by themselves setting up as spiritualists and attempting in that unscientific manner to manufacture theories of the Absolute on the basis of any worldly stuff and thereby prove one more nuisance and obstruction in the way of the honest enquiry of the Transcendental. Those who wilfully offend against reason are rightly punished by the perpetuation of their ignorance, for which they have to thank only themselves. The *sāttvika* perturbations due to love for Krishna, are objects of longing to devotees of the very highest order who are absolutely free from all ignorance and all taint of self-seeking. This is necessarily unintelligible to those who have not thought it worth their while to cross the threshold of spiritual life. Their self-sufficient attitude towards the problems of the eternal duties, is only a proof of their utter slavery to the illusory power of Vishnu, the goddess *Māyā*, who is ever usefully engaged in deluding the race of the hypocrites of all shades.

The utterances and activities of the servants of Vishnu are a perpetual enigma to the shrewdest atheists. No efforts of their perverted intellect can find out their real significance. The words uttered by the Vaishnava are transcendental, as are all activities. They are perfectly incomprehensible to conceited sinners who have been assigned this material world as the place of their abode as the expiatory punishment of such perversity. The deluding power of Vishnu is ever engaged in guarding the portals of the transcendental realm against the impious assaults of all builders of the Babel. The realisation of this truth alone enables us to attain that perfect humility of the spirit to which the gates of the eternal realm of Vishnu are ever likely to open of themselves. The humility that is current in this world is the perverted reflection of the substantive spiritual quality and is all the more heinous because such disguised form of self-conceit constitutes the deliberate misrepresentation of true humility. External roughness or

smoothness of conduct is no criterion of the real humility. The really humble conduct of the self-less devotee of Vishnu may seem as rudeness, conceit and even arrogance to the pretended view of the deliberate hypocrite. There is no help for a person who chooses to wilfully misunderstand. Such persons have been aptly compared to the owl whose eyes are denied only the sight of the glorious Sun.

To many impartial critics who are fully conscious of the vagaries of our present intellect in its pretended efforts to approach the Absolute and who are, therefore, prepared to reserve their judgment on a subject so alien to their whole experience the conduct of Sree Gaursundar, on this particular occasion, may still seem to be open to the charge of apparent inconsistency. They may properly enough ask whether Sree Gaursundar wanted to be regarded as the devotee of Krishna, or as Krishna Himself. If He wished to teach the people of this world the highest and only service of the Absolute Person by His own practice, how could the Manifestation of His real Nature as Recipient of worship be consistent with such purpose?

This criticism overlooks the fact that there is a very close approximation to the Divinity in the highest stage of devotion when the devotee is apt to be persuaded that He is Krishna Himself and in that mood sets himself to imitating the Activities of Krishna. This is to be carefully distinguished from the erroneous conclusion of the professors of the cult of the undifferentiated *Brahman* that the fulfilment of worship, which they regard as only a probationary stage, is attained by complete merging with the Object of worship Who is conceived as being absolutely devoid of form and activity of any kind.

In the case of the true devotee the worship is not a make-believe, temporary expedient as it is in the case of the other. If the service which we offer to Krishna is supposed to be due to certain changing circumstances it at once loses the character of sincerity and truth. The Vaishnava knows Himself to be the eternal servant of the Lord. He does not think it possible or desirable to merge in Krishna and thereby cease to be His servant. This is the ambition of those hypocrites who, while pretending to be the servants of a god whom they cannot or do not purposely attempt

to define, really cherish in the back-ground of their disloyal minds the design of being some day freed from the irksome necessity of such service as the reward(?) of their insincerity! To them, therefore, the end is necessarily different from the means.

By the adoption, for the time being, of a particular method, which is to be discarded on the attainment of the object of such endeavour, the Absolute cannot be realised. The relative can never lead, not even as a means, to the Absolute. It involves the fallacy of the major premise. The major premise in this case is too narrow and the middle term is undistributed. Untruth cannot lead to the Truth. By means of the Truth alone the Truth can be realised. As we do not possess the knowledge of the Truth and have no chance of ever knowing Him with the help of our present limited faculties we are either doomed to the state of eternal ignorance or liable to be enlightened from above by grace. There is no other alternative. The Vaishnava, therefore, accepts the latter alternative for attaining to the knowledge of the Truth. The abstract monist holds consistently neither to the one nor to the other. He does not believe fully either in his own ability, or in revelation. He has, therefore, no *locus standi* and necessarily tumbles headlong into the depths of Uncertainty which he calls God or *Brahman* in order to delude himself and his followers with the hope, which, despite all perversity, his and their natures instinctively demand, that they are for a time being as a sort of servants of the Absolute. When the true devotee exhibits the moods and activities of his Master he does so as a loyal servant rendered completely oblivious, by the contemplation of his Beloved, of his own separate existence and interests. But he knows, specially at such moments more fully than ever, that he himself is *not* the Master. The conduct of the monist in his so-called realised state (*siddhi*) bears no resemblance to the activities of the devotee engrossed by the thoughts of his Master who, due to his consequent forgetfulness of his own self, thus enacts the Master's part. But the monist ceases to function on merging with the Absolute (?).

In the case of Sree Chaitanya He is sometimes found to be declaring Himself to be Krishna. Those who want to misunderstand will say that He was guilty of inconsistency of conduct because He could have easily avoided any suspicions being aroused

regarding the sincerity of His own conduct by abstaining from such explicit declarations of His possession of the Master's Nature. But at the same time we must remember that He was not *merely simulating* but *actually personating* the devotee. This is incomprehensible to us. But it happens to be the fact, as testified to by the author of *Sree-Chaitanya-Charitāmrita* in the opening verses of his work dealing with the object of the Lord's Appearance in this world. The real object, says Sree Krishnadās Kaviraj, was to taste His own sweetness by clothing Himself with the disposition and beauty of Sree Rādhikā. All other work could have been, and was as a matter of fact actually performed by the secondary *Avatāras*. The Lord's own special Purpose in appearing in the world, which cannot be realised by any except Himself, was to experience the love of Sree Rādhikā for Himself. He, therefore, could not be recognised by those who were not His innermost devotees.

It is true that He was recognised as Krishna by His followers from whom He did not hide His real Nature. This was necessary for the purpose of the *Leelā* and the possession of such knowledge by His devotees served to enhance the charm of their service and also to regulate their conduct. Therefore, these direct manifestations possess a double face like Sree Chaitanya Himself. Those who choose to ignore the face of the devotee, will miss the real significance of His Conduct and Teaching, no less than those who disregard the Divine face. All so-called partial truth is a deluding empiric conception and has no place in spiritual experience. In the absolute realm there is diversity, without rupturous dividing lines.

In order to be able to understand the activities of the devotees of the Absolute Person Vishnu it is necessary to remember that enlightenment from above is the indispensable essential pre-condition. It is futile to attempt to know Him by means of our present limited understanding. Hence the necessity of having recourse to the spiritual preceptor and spiritual initiation. Initiation (*dikshā*) consists in complete submission to the Absolute, which is equivalent to loyal and sincere submission to the guidance of the spiritual Preceptor, such submission being identical with obedience to the Word of Krishna as revealed in the *satvata*

Shāstras of which the spiritual Preceptor is both the only *bona fide* exponent and follower, the indispensable requisites for spiritual preceptorship.

The act of the disciple in submitting to the Preceptor, is not to be confounded with the renunciation of the right of private judgment or subordinating one's own judgment to another's. Both Preceptor and disciple are under obligation to obey only the spiritual Scriptures. It is a matter of willing admission of superior progress on the path of the Eternal, and not a question of enforced servitude. Both preceptor and disciple are free and sincere enquirers of the Absolute by the method of unconditional submission to the Absoute. Both realise the necessity and the *rationale* of such submission. Both know that the only real freedom consists in absolute submission to the Truth. All these conditions are scrupulously observed in their mutual relationship by the *bona fide* Preceptor and disciple. The effect of such practical submission to the Absolute is freedom from the limitations of the materialised senses. No sooner is this act of complete self-surrender to the spiritual Preceptor made then the devotee is accepted by Krishna as His own. The body, senses and mind of such a person are surcharged with the spiritual essence by the Grace of Krishna. And the initiated thereby becomes eligible for eternally serving the Feet of Krishna by the purified body, senses and mind.

The service of the Absolute is possible only on the plane of the Absolute and in the spiritual body by means of the spiritual senses. The soul of *jīva* possesses body, senses and mind. Krishna has also His Own Divine Form, Senses and Mind. The soul of the *jīva* is constituted to serve Krishna with his spiritual body, mind and senses. The activities of the *jīva* in this world, in the fallen state, is a perverted deluded caricature of his true and eternal function. The body, mind and senses of the devotee appear to conditioned souls to be similar to their adventitious material body, senses and mind. But this is not really the case. It is the effect of delusion. The *sātvika* perturbations which are possible only in the spiritual body, appear to the materialised vision of sinful *jīvas* as possessing the character of physical manifestations. Such conclusion is equally deluded. Those who do not admit the necessity of submission to Krishna, cannot necessarily

understand what the practice of such submission implies. The act of submission is the key to the spiritual realm. The denial of this is tantamount to ignorance. The refusal to submit to the Truth is the logical equivalent of the slavery of untruth by means of the deluding physical senses. The atheists are the only ignorant and unfree persons by their refusal to follow the guidance of their reason.

Sree Gaursundar talked much while He was exhibiting the *Leelā* of Direct Manifestation under the guise of nervous distemper. This confirmed the suspicions of those who were looking out for the symptoms of disease. The words uttered by the devotee are transcendental sounds that have the power of producing spiritual enlightenment by freeing from worldliness, if the unprejudiced ear is turned to them. The Transcendental Lord is served as the Transcendental Sounds. Those who admit the spiritual nature of the devotees of Krishna know that they are constantly engaged in the service of Krishna on the plane of the Absolute. The utterance of too much earthly sound is no doubt a sign of aggravated worldliness and is the malady of madness to which we are sometimes subjected by the mercy of Krishna so that we may be reminded thereby of the unsubstantial and transitory nature of our most highly valued worldly possessions. One suffering from the aggravated disease of worldliness is not healed by the application of medicines which are supplied by physical Nature for the restoration of the worldly delusion. Such malady, treatment and cure all belong to the realm of delusions. They only serve to keep up the deluded idea of the wholesome nature of this world and its concerns for the correctness of atheists by such bitter experience. The delusion of those who put their trust in the delusion of the earthly physicians, who have a very high opinion of themselves, their science and its utility, is augmented by the practice of such trust.

The maladies of both worldly patients and worldly doctors can be healed only if they learn to distinguish between the symptoms of real disease, the punishment of sin, and the similar spiritual manifestations of devotees who are absolutely free from all taint of worldliness, which are the only cure of all diseases. But the ill-fated have not the leisure, so wholly engrossed they choose to be in their worldly concerns and self-gratulations, to exercise

their unprejudiced reason on the subject of their disease of the worldly sojourn. They are so absolutely persuaded of their own rectitude that they employ their wits in disproving the claims, to any real goodness, of those very persons who endeavour to cure them of their worldly disease by affording them the opportunity of listening to those redeeming sounds that bring the tidings of the Absolute to all benighted souls. They mistake, as the symptoms of an unsound mind with which unfortunately they are only too familiar, words and utterances that are the *only* medicine of their diseased souls. This infatuity is the corrective punishment of their unwarrantable self-complacency. Krishna's Deluding Power is ever seeking the holes in the coats of everyone of us in order to disturb us in the most sensitive parts and thereby to cure us of the disease of such fatuous reliance on the resources of our deluded, limited understanding. He, therefore, sends His own beloved ones, in the guise of patients, to the doctors of this world for delivering such of them as keep their ears open to the voice of Krishna spoken through the mouths of His devotees. But the other sort seeing, sees not, and misses their only opportunity, as further corrective punishment for their gross, deliberate worldliness. This is the fate of those worldly-wise people who consider the Unrestrained Talk of Sree Gaur-sundar as a conclusive proof of His madness.

Of course it is possible, not inevitable for a time even after initiation, for a person to exhibit the state of suffering from the actual effects of sensuous activities that he had indulged in before his initiation. This does not come amiss to the *bona fide* probationer who never wants to get rid of his merited sufferings in lieu of his intention to serve. Such suffering causes the genuine probationer no pain but, on the contrary, is to him a source of unalloyed spiritual bliss as providing greater opportunities of service. To the uninitiated the sight of apparent suffering of the devotee presents a double face, *viz.*, of those patient sufferings and merited punishment, both of which are untrue and are a trick of the Deluding Power to prevent the obstinate impious from serving the devotee as *devotee*. The doctor who may be called by the devotee to treat him is afforded the opportunity of rendering unconscious service to the Vaishnava and will obtain his reward

in the shape of a lessening of his worldliness, if he is careful not to allow his mind to cherish any prejudice against the *bona fide* of the real devotee merely from the fact that he might have been guilty of worldly conduct in his past life. This total absence of all irrational prejudice is possible only in a person who is sincerely conscious of his own imperfections.

A doctor who treats a real *sādhu* without prejudice thereby unconsciously serves Krishna Himself and obtains as his reward freedom from all ignorance by the mercy of the *sādhu* who is pleased to manifest to him his real spiritual nature by the Will of Krishna. As soon as one obtains the real sight of the Vaishnava he instantly awakes from the deep waking slumber of ignorance to which he was being lulled by the deluding tricks of *Māyā*. No amount of any so-called unprejudiced service rendered to a non-Vaishnava can lead to such a result. On the contrary if a non-Vaishnava is too zealously served his so-called *benefactor* (?) is liable to be punished by an increase of his delusion as he would thereby only develop the vanity of false humanity which makes him overlook the distinction between the Vaishnava and the non-Vaishnava as recipients of our service. Such a person can hardly be expected to be ever able, unless after he is really cured of his fondness for non-Vaishnavas, to grasp the real significance of the eternal distinction between the spiritual and the material, or to realise the truth that his soul has no affinity whatever with the objects and aspirations of this world.

The apparent defects of a *bona fide* Vaishnava have been aptly compared to the mud and froth that are sometimes found in the holy water of the Ganges. These in no way affect the eternal and unchangeable purity of the sacred stream that issues from the Holy Feet of the Supreme Lord. On the contrary even such mud and froth themselves imbibe, by contact with the chastening water of the Ganges, the quality of delivering all really unclean persons from the sticking dirt of worldliness. It requires a really impartial and supremely patient judgment to be able to enter into this spirit of the philosophy of theism. Sree Gaursundar's teachings are a sealed book to the crooked and captious, but are easily understood by the really candid. 'Worldly merit' or 'demerit' is of no

help in this matter. Sincerity of the soul is the one thing needful. Insincerity is the concomitant of worldliness which is the cause of all our self-made ignorance and misery.

But some may still raise the objection that Sree Gaursundar could have done even greater good and obtained a better hearing for His teachings if He had exhibited no such symptoms even of apparent madness. Of course the Supreme Lord is free to do whatever He likes and there can be no defect in what He Wills or Does. Gaursundar was, in this instance, exhibiting the *Lcclā* of the ideal devotee. The necessity for such performance lay in the fact that the deliverance of all fettered souls is absolutely dependent on the realisation of the transcendental nature of the devotee of God. Such realisation can alone enlighten him regarding the spiritual nature of His own proper self. The object of Sree Gaursundar was to remove all misconceptions that stand in the way of such realisation.

One of the commonest fallacies of this wide world is that religion is only one specific department of human activities out of many; or, in other words that it is possible to serve both God and Mammon at the same time, or at any rate in recurring succession. This idea, it would not be an exaggeration to observe, has been allowed by culpable negligence on the part of writers to pervade all literature of modern times. Religion is pedantically differentiated from politics, from morality, from aesthetics and from worldly activities of all sorts, not so much for the purpose of emphasising the eternal distinction between the spiritual and the material but with the sinister motive of restricting the scope of religious activity itself within defined worldly bounds. If this fallacy, which is so widely disseminated, once finds a real lodgment in the brain, one can never realise the nature of the spiritual service of God, nor understand that it is possible to practise the same even while we are placed in this world without doing harm to anybody. I may notice in passing that the practice of so-called religious *toleration*, which is so much affected by a particular stamp of thinkers, is also based upon the above fallacy, viz., that it is possible without any real danger to anyone to keep religion out of the other affairs

of life. One, who prays regularly to God in the evening and morning and thinks that thereby his obligations to Godhead are at least partially fulfilled, utterly misunderstands the nature of his duty as the exclusive servant of the Lord. The obligation to serve Krishna is a self-imposed principle which knows no limits. Krishna can and ought to be served in all circumstances by each and every person of this world. One who really serves Him does so in his *every* act and thought. The devotee serves Krishna *at all times* both when he wakes and when he seems to sleep. Every act of the devotee under every circumstance is an act of service. One who fails to understand this fundamental principle of spiritual existence, cannot recognise the devotee of God and is doomed to sin and worldliness for this reason, notwithstanding all his exertions resembling the external conduct of the real *sādhus*.

The devotee of Krishna serves Him under all circumstances and he does nothing else. He neither eats nor sleeps but only serves. When He exhibits the activity of apparent eating and sleeping he does so for our benefit in order to show us how even we, for whom eating and sleeping are necessary, can get rid of this false existence with its whole round of so-called interminable duties and obligations, if we only obey the Word of God manifested in the holy Scriptures and explained by the discourse and practice, of the eternal servants of Krishna who, by His command, make themselves visible to our mortal senses and who live and move in our midst for the fulfilment of the beneficial Purpose of the Supreme Lord in regard to ourselves. Such is the real nature of the true servants of Krishna. The Vaishnava tells us that the soul of every entity has the capacity of serving Krishna however circumstanced he may appear to be. The souls of the stone, the tree, the baby in the womb, the lunatic, the dying and the dead, are all equally eligible in this matter. Because no circumstance of this deluding world, however formidable or adverse it may seem to be to our eclipsed cognition, can offer any real obstruction to the spiritual service of the Lord. It is the truth of this proposition that the devotees are engaged in establishing for the benefit of the unbelievers of this world, by all their teaching and practice.

It would be a great blunder, therefore, to suppose that any evil can befall the servants of Krishna, here or elsewhere. The devotee is put by Krishna in all possible situations in order to train up the judgment of those who *profess to believe* in them. It is only when a person's budding faith survives this purgatorial ordeal that he is in a position to understand the teaching of the Vaishnava which is identical with his conduct. Conversely the hypocrites are prevented from committing the offence of the pretence of serving the devotee by such constant searching of their weakest points. These exhibitions serve the doubly beneficial purpose of enhancing the faith of all sincere seekers of the Truth and keeping at a distance all those who have no inclination to serve Krishna but only themselves.

In this world we cannot really serve Krishna; we can only serve those servants of the Lord who are mercifully sent by Him into our midst to deliver us from the state of sin and ignorance. Krishna cannot be served by the sinful and the ignorant. Those who think that it is possible to serve Krishna with the resources of our limited understandings or by the physical bodies, confound the transcendental service of Krishna which passes the understanding of man with the corresponding atheistical performances. To complete this delusion they are also firmly persuaded by reason of their cultivated aversion to Krishna that whatever any individual sinner may choose to fancy as the Truth contains an element of truth. What they really want is that Truth must serve them and not they the Truth. They want to be the masters and not the servants of Krishna. But these irrational, hypocritical, self-seeking, misguided atheists are prevented, by their perversity due to such senseless prostitution of their freedom of will, from having the Sight of Krishna or His devotees.

Those who fail to realise the fatal nature of the offence committed against the Vaishnavas, are unfit to serve the devotees of Krishna although by such service alone conditioned souls can be delivered from the consequences of their wilful transgressions. It is an offence against the Vaishnavas to suppose that a *bona fide* Vaishnava does anything else than the service of Krishna which is absolutely free from the least taint of worldliness. It is also an offence against the Vaishnavas to serve or associate with a

non-Vaishnava, or to suppose that a sinner while in the state of sin is a Vaishnava. Until we are freed from these impious errors we cannot be said to desire the mercy of the true devotees of the Lord. The transcendental activities and teachings of Sree Gaur-sundar as expounded and practised by His associates and the followers of His associates, can alone save us from these errors to which an Age given to superficial controversies, like the present, has an abnormal besetting tendency to subscribe.

The real significance of these Pastimes of the Lord, although they happened to be perfectly explicit, were not apparently permitted to be understood even by the devotees in order to impress upon worldlings the truth that *no one* is able to know Him until and unless He enables one to know.

The tidings of the recovery of Sree Gaur-sundar filled everyone with joy. The Vaishnavas specially availed of this opportunity of impressing upon Him the necessity of serving the Feet of Sree Krishna by urging the reason that there is no certainty of life or sanity. Sree Chaitanya was naturally partial to the Vaishnavas. Their exhortations made Him smile as He stopped to do obeisance to them all on His way in the company of His innumerable pupils.

Sree Chaitanya then resumed His duties as teacher. He taught His pupils inside the Chandimandap of the house of Mukunda-Sanjaya. While the Lord was thus engaged in expounding the texts to His pupils perfumed medicated oil was applied to His Head by some exceptionally fortunate persons of many good deeds. Sree Chaitanya took His seat in the middle of the room and was surrounded by His pupils who sat in a circle round their Teacher. That gathering is without a parallel in the annals of the world. Sree Brindāvandas Thākur ransacked the Scriptures for a parallel instance for the purpose of comparison. At Badārikāsrama Sree Nārāyana teaches Sanaka and other Rishis sitting round Him in a circle. The Act of Sree Gaur-sundar resembled this *Leelā* of Sree Nārāyana Himself. The comparison holds good for the reason that the Darling of Sachi is the Same as Sree Nārāyana who dwells at Badarikāsrama. It was, therefore, the very same Pastime of

Badarikāsrama that Sree Chaitanya was thus enacting in the company of His disciples at Nabadwip. ♦

At the conclusion of His teaching by mid-day Sree Gaursundar would go out with His pupils to the Ganges for His Bath. After sporting for a time in the holy water of the Ganges He returned home and worshipped Vishnu. Offering water and circumambulating Sree Tulasi He sat to His meal by uttering repeatedly the Name of Hari. Sree Lakshmi Devi served the Food and the Lord of Vaikuntha ate the same. The pious mother was privileged to have the full view of this Sight. After meal He used to chew betel and then retired for rest. Sree Lakshmi Devi tended His Feet as the Lord laid Himself down in His Bed. The Lord then bent His Auspicious Glance on the goddess who serves in the office of Sleep of the Supreme Lord. Having rested for a while Sree Gaursundar used to go out of the house a second time with His books.

CHAPTER XII

IN THE STREETS OF NABADWIP

SREE Gaur Sundar as Professor chose the afternoons for visiting the citizens of Nabadwip in the company of His pupils. He graciously accosted all the people; and everyone entertained feelings of the deepest regard for the Lord. This respectful attitude towards Him, which was universal, was a matter of instinct, as at this period no one was aware of the Divinity of the Lord. The Lord frequented all the streets of the city affording the people an opportunity of beholding Him Who is inaccessible even to the gods.

The Lord now behaved with the same absence of reserve on these visits to the citizens as we noticed on the occasion of His nervous malady. In this case also no one was able to recognise Him although He stood fully manifest to all seeming. Thākur Brindāvandā has handed down the following particulars of these activities.

On one of these occasions Sree Gaur Sundar presented Himself at the door of a weaver's home. The weaver at once made obeisance to Him with the greatest respect. The Lord asked Him to bring out his best cloth, which the weaver did at once. The Lord asked what price he expected for his cloth. The weaver replied that he would accept whatever was offered. After the bargain had been settled the Lord said He had no money with Him. The weaver replied that it was not necessary for Him to pay immediately. He might take the cloth, wear it and pay in ten days or a fortnight or by instalments, according to His convenience. The Lord bestowed His auspicious Glance on that weaver as He left the place.

The Lord then entered the quarter of the town which was occupied by the milkmen. He took His Seat at the door-way of

the home of one of the cowherds. The Lord, by the privilege of a Brāhmaṇa commanded him jocosely in an imperious tone to bring out his milk and curds, saying that He would favour him that day by accepting the best of the gifts that his household could provide. The cowherds beheld it was the God of love Himself Who thus asked for their gift. With great respect they offered their best seat to Him. The Lord continued to talk in a jocose vein to the cowherds. They addressed Him as their 'maternal uncle'. Some asked Him to eat their cooked food in their Company. A certain milkman took Him to his home on his shoulders. A few remarked that He had once eaten all the cooked food that was in their houses and He might probably recollect it. Saraswati, the Goddess of speech, spoke truly, but the milkmen themselves did not know. The Lord laughed at these words of the cowherds. All the milkmen now brought out their milk, ghee, curds, *sar* and excellent butter and gladly gave to the Lord. The Lord expressed His satisfaction at such friendly conduct of the cowherds.

He then went forward and entered the home of a dealer in perfumes (*gandha-vanika*). The trader made his bow at the Feet of the Lord with great respect. The Lord asked him to bring out his best perfumes. As he did so the Lord enquired their price. The trader replied that the price must be already known to Him and that it would be hardly proper to demand any price from Him. That trader then begged to be allowed to apply the perfumes to His Body and to return home for that day. If enough of fragrance persisted till next day and did not cease after bath, then He might pay any price that He liked. With these words the trader, with his own hand, put his perfumes all over the Holy Form of the Lord in a rapture of joy that was perfectly unaccountable. 'The Supreme Lord', observes Thākura Brindāvandas, 'abiding in the heart of all beings, ever attracts their minds unto Himself. Who is not bewitched by the Sight of His Beauty?'

The Lord next made His way to the home of a garland-maker. The garland-maker was smitten with the extraordinary Beauty of the Lord and did obeisance to Him after offering a seat with great respect. The Lord asked Him to give good garlands and told him that He had no money with Him. The garland-maker

noticing that He had the appearance of one who had actually realised Godhead said that He might not pay. With these words the garland-maker placed his garlands on the Divine Form of the Lord. This made Sree Gaursundar and all His pupils laugh. The Lord after bestowing His auspicious Glance on that garland-maker, made his way to the home of a betel-seller.

The betel-seller was taken by surprise on seeing the Lord Himself crossing the threshold of His humble abode. In his delight the betel-seller, of his own accord, offered Him his betels which made the Lord laugh. The Lord asked why he was offering the betel made up with betel-nut without demanding any price. The betel-seller made reply that it was due to a spontaneous impulse of his mind. The Lord began to chew the prepared betel that had been offered. The betel-seller then presented the Lord with betel-leaf, camphor and other spices of excellent quality used in making up the betel, desiring Him with great reverence, to accept it and would not take any price. Sree Gaursundar favoured that betel-seller in this fashion.

The Lord visited the residence of a dealer in conches who made Him obeisance with great reverence on beholding Him. The Lord asked for good conches declaring that as He had no money with Him He did not know how He could buy them. The conch-dealer, at once gave the Lord his best conches with the remark that He might pay at His leisure and consider Himself under no obligation to pay. The Lord was very much pleased by hearing these words of the conch-dealer and bestowed on him the favour of His auspicious Glance.

In this manner the Lord visited regularly the houses of all the towns-people of Nabadwip.

The Lord next made His way to the house of a diviner who could predict everything. The Lord told him that as he was reputed to be a very competent person He had come to him to enquire for information regarding Himself as to what He was in His former births. 'Right' said the diviner. But on applying himself as a preliminary to repeating mentally the *mantram* of Gopāla that diviner of excellent deeds at once beheld the Divine Form with the bluish hue, Four-Armed, holding the Conch, Disc, Club and

Lotus, His Breast adorned with the jewel *Kaustuva* and the sign of *Srivatsa*. He saw the Lord in the prison-chamber at the dead of night with His parents in front of Him in the act of adoration. Presently he had a vision that the father, taking up his new-born Boy in his arms, put Him away that very night in the cowherd settlement. He saw again the Nude, Beautiful, two-Armed Child, with the belt of jingling bells on His Waist, tasting the butter with both Hands. The diviner in fact saw all those Signs that belong to his own cherished Divinity on Whom he meditated at all time. He beheld once again the Divine Form, with the Flute touching His Lips, in the triple-bent attitude, surrounded by the milk-maids, discoursing instrumental and vocal music. On beholding this extraordinary vision the diviner opened his eyes in wonder and fixing his gaze on Gaurāṅga went on repeating his recitals. He then supplicated the Deity of his cherished worship in these words, 'Listen, O Gopāla, Divine Boy! Do Thou show me quickly Who this Brāhmaṇa was in His former Births.'

Thereupon, the diviner had a vision of the Lord, Bow in Hand, of grass-green Hue, seated in the Attitude of the Warrior. He saw Him again in the midst of the Cataclysm of complete destruction in the Form of the wonderful Boar Whose Tusk was holding aloft this world. He saw Him once more Appearing as the Man-lion, of most fierce Aspect, infinitely Tender to His devotee. He saw Him again in the Act of deluding the sacrificing King Bali, in the Form of the Dwarf. Then He beheld Him in the Form of the Fish in the waters of the Deluge, playing merrily in the Flood. That diviner of excellent deeds saw the Lord once again in the Form of the maddened Holder of the Plough, with the Club in His Hand. The diviner saw the shining Form of Jagannāth with Subhadrā in the middle and Balarāma on His Right. The diviner had a vision in this manner of the True Nature of the Lord, but yet he understood nothing. 'Such', says Thākura Brindāvandas, 'is the force of the deluding power of the Lord.'

The diviner was very much astonished and thought within himself that the Brāhmaṇa must be a great sorcerer or He might be some god who had perchance appeared to him in a frolic in

the guise of a Brāhmaṇa in order to delude him. He also duly noticed the indications of the super-human fiery glow irradiating the Body of the Brāhmaṇa and was perplexed thinking that he was being befooled for pretending to know everything. While the diviner was busy with these thoughts the Lord said laughing: 'Who am I? What do you see? Tell me everything without reserve.' The diviner said, 'Be pleased to leave me alone for the present. Let me repeat my *mantram* with a clear mind. I shall tell You in the afternoon.' 'Very good,' said the Lord as He went off on His way laughing.

The Lord now presented Himself at the home of His beloved Sridhar. The Lord often visited Sridhar at his house on various excuses and never left him without exchanging jokes with him for a short time. On seeing the Lord Sridhar at once approached Him with great respect and made Him take a seat. Sridhar was naturally of a most gentle disposition. The Lord's behaviour was that of a most restless and arrogant person. Thereupon the following dialogue ensued between Sree Gaursundar and Sridhar.

The Lord asked, 'Sridhar, you take the Name of Hari constantly. Why do you yet suffer such great privations? Tell Me how it is that you suffer from want of food and clothing by serving the Lord of the Goddess of wealth?' Sridhar replied, 'But I do not actually starve and I also put on clothing of some sort, be it long or short'. The Lord went on, 'I notice your cloth is patched at a dozen places and there is no straw to the thatch of your hut. Is there the person in the town who is stinted for food and clothing by worshipping *Chandi* and *Bishahari*?' Sridhar said, 'Bipra, Thou hast said well. But yet the time of all persons passes all the same. The king lives in a palace of gems and eats and dresses most sumptuously; the birds inhabit the tree-top. Nevertheless the time of both passes away all the same. They enjoy the fruits of their respectively acts awarded by the Will of *Iṣvara*.'

The Lord said, 'You have immense wealth. You dine on it most sumptuously in secret. When will that day be when I shall make your secret known to everybody? Then shall I see how you can deceive the people so!' Said Sridhar, 'Pandit' it is better for you to return home. It is not meet for us to quarrel with

each other.' The Lord said, 'I am not going to let you off in this fashion. Tell me at once what you are going to give Me.' Sridhar replied, 'I live by selling the bark of the plantain tree. You better say what at all I can give your Reverence.' The Lord said, 'I am not just now going to take the buried treasures that you possess. I shall have it later. For the present give me *gratis* plantain, radishes and the soft core of the plantain tree. I shall not trouble you if you do so.' Sridhar thought within himself, 'The Brähmana is so very arrogant. He is certainly going to thrash me one of these days. And even if He hurts me what can I do to a Brähmana? Neither can I afford to give Him daily without being paid. Still what a Brähmana takes even by force or guile is surely my good fortune, and I shall, therefore, give Him everyday.' After meditating in this manner Sridhar said, 'Listen, Your Reverence. You need not pay anything. I shall willingly give you core, plantain, radishes and bark. So be pleased not to quarrel with me any more.' The Lord said, 'This is well and good. There will be no more quarrel from now if only you always give Me *good* core, plantain and radishes.'

The Lord dined everyday off the plantain-bark of Sridhar. The core, plantain and radishes of Sridhar were the most relished dishes at His Daily Meal. The Lord ate the gourd, that grew on the plant trained on Sridhar's thatch, cooked in milk and pepper. The Lord now asked, 'Sridhar, what do you think I am? I shall go home as soon as you tell Me only this.' Sridhar said, 'You are a Brähmana, a part and parcel of Vishnu Himself.' The Lord replied, 'You do not know. I come of a family of milkmen. But you see Me as the Son of a Brähmana. I, however, know Myself to be a milk-man.' Sridhar laughed on hearing the Words of the Lord and did not recognise his own cherished Deity by the force of His Deluding Power. Said the Lord, 'Sridhar, I will tell you the Truth. All the greatness of your Ganges is due to Myself.' Sridhar protested, 'Well, Nimāi Pandit, art Thou not afraid even of the Ganges? Man grows sober with advancing years. But Your restlessness is increasing with double speed'. After indulging in such merry *repertoire* with Sridhar Lord Gau-rāṅga-Hari returned to His own Home.

The above episodes may seem to represent the Lord in the character of a begging Brāhmaṇa who is out among the hard-worked artisans and poor people to squeeze from them the best that their poverty can yield. There are two subjects in this picture, *viz.*, the conduct of the Lord and of the humble folk, both of which deserve our careful consideration.

Sree Gaursundar did not accept the gifts of the poor for any charitable purpose but frankly for His Own Personal Use. He does not appear to have rendered them any service in return; those people did not expect nor wish for any return. Neither did they apparently give their things with the idea that they were giving them to a needy beggar. They gave from a feeling of reverence and not on account of His individual qualities of which they had not always a very decidedly all-round favourable opinion. Even Sridhar admitted *to himself* that the Brāhmaṇa was unduly arrogant. The soothsayer, who to many persons would seem to have been the most favoured of all, took Him to be a Person versed in the Black Art Who was trying to befool him. So all these people gave away their *best* things to this arrogant Brāhmaṇa in conformity with a customary practice and not for the reason that Sree Gaursundar possessed any outstanding merit or worth of His Own. Sridhar even complains that the Brāhmaṇa was not above using both force as well as dissimulation to obtain the lion's share of his scanty wares. Sree Gaursundar may, thus appear to be evidently exploiting the credulity of ordinary superstitious, ignorant, masses for His own personal profit and thereby countenancing the objectionable practices of those degenerate Brāhmaṇas who go about begging for their livelihood.

Why did those poor people give Him their *best* things? Let Sridhar speak for the rest. Sridhar said he did not covet the wealth of kings. He thought that the time of himself was passing in exactly the same way as that of kings and he did not hold God-head responsible for making any inequitable difference between a king and himself as in his opinion there was really no difference. But neither was Sridhar a cynic. He was aware that the things of this world were capable of being rightly used in the service of Vishnu; and that no depth of poverty was an excuse for the neglect of this paramount duty. *Giving to the Brāhmaṇa was in*

his opinion, identical with giving to Vishnu 'because Vishnu was represented in this world by the Brāhmaṇa for accepting such service through His devotees. True, the Brāhmaṇa in question, *viz.*, Sree Gaursundar, appeared to him to be very arrogant and dissembling. But he himself was also not prepared to give willingly anything to the Brāhmaṇa on the worthless plea of his utter poverty; and, therefore, the only alternative was to suffer his things to be taken by force or fraud by the Brāhmaṇa who did him the favour of accepting his things in this boisterous fashion'. This is the inside of the heart of Sridhar. This was the faith of all those humble people.

But can we really serve Godhead by offering Him the things of this world? Sree Gaursundar says we can. If we regard Godhead and the objects offered to Godhead as categories of this world the process is objectionable involving the degradation of worship. Godhead is not a receiver of any earthly objects. But we have also nothing to offer Him except these very earthly objects, because we ourselves are of this Earth at present. Sree Gaursundar says that we are not earthly; but if we attain our natural, super-mundane, state we are in a position to realise that the objects of this Earth have also a spiritual relationship to ourselves. This spiritual side of the things of this world does not manifest itself to us as long as we continue to regard them as being meant for gratifying our hankering for worldly enjoyment. Such attitude is the sign as well as cause of our real ignorance of our true self.

There is such a thing as the soul, apart from limited and temporary entities of all gross and subtle types. This soul is our proper self. The vision of our souls is for the present clouded by the exclusive contemplation of alien objects which we are apt to consider as having affinity with ourselves. The soul in the sinful state values only such use of things as can afford him pleasure in some form or other. He constantly strives to multiply the opportunity and scope of such enjoyment. This vision is, however, the clouded vision. It was not Sridhar's vision. Sridhar realised that the enjoyment of the things of this world could not really satisfy his soul. The things of this world are meant not to be enjoyed but to be used in some other way. They are to be offered

unconditionally to One for Whose *Sole* enjoyment they are meant. And Who is that One Person? He cannot be any sinful creature. He is no mortal, but Godhead Himself. The Brāhmaṇa is part and parcel of Vishnu. Vishnu also appears in this gross world for enjoying the things of this world. Sridhar believed that He does so for the benefit of sinners, that Vishnu appears in the form of Brāhmaṇas who are free from all sin. A Brāhmaṇa knows the proper use of the things of this world. He does not seek his own enjoyment but serves Godhead therewith. It is because he possesses this knowledge that he is a Brāhmaṇa. If anything is given willingly or unwillingly to a Brāhmaṇa it is offered to Godhead and is sure to reach Him through the Brāhmaṇa. The things of this world in this relationship to Sree Gaursundar also appeared to Sridhar in this light. This was so because Sridhar's soul was in his natural state who could realise that he has no affinity with the things of this world as a means of his worldly enjoyment.

Sridhar's philosophy might seem to make no provision for the material prosperity of the world. It may also seem to be akin to blind faith. The last objection has been answered in the preceding paragraph. The so-called clear-sightedness of the conditioned souls is their real blindness. Our faith in the value of the things of this world as objects of our enjoyment, is the real blind faith. Sridhar's faith is not blinded by this essentially irrational partiality in favour of worldliness the utter-worthlessness of which must be patent to all as a fact of everyone's daily and hourly experience. Sridhar's philosophy does not, indeed, trouble about the progress of this world which it attributes to the Direct Action of Godhead awarding the material fruits of the sinful endeavours of conditioned souls who alone happen to be the denizens of this mundane world. He regards so-called worldly prosperity more as a snare than a help. But he is careful not to ignore, for this reason, the very existence of this world. The world is not an illusion.

So long as we are placed in this world we cannot but have to do with things mundane. Our duty, while we are so placed, must, however, be to use all kinds of material facility for the service of Vishnu Who has no wants of His Own but Who condescends to

receive our offerings in order to enable us to live, also under these adverse circumstances, a life of service. The service of Vishnu is the only true and eternal religion. Its truth can be recognised by our clouded understanding during those lucid intervals when we are impelled by the experience of worldliness to be impartial seekers of a really wholesome function. There are sinless people who are not subject to the domination of the enjoyable side of phenomena to whom all things of this world disclose their spiritual forms who teach us to serve Vishnu with their help. The condition that is ensured by such service is the only true progress and one that, instead of augmenting our blindness, serves to clear up our blinded vision.

But we may still be disposed to ask certain questions, 'Will the offering of our best things to unworthy and beggarly Brāhmaṇas, who claim them as a matter of right for the purpose of gratifying their worldly appetites, also conduce to such a result?' It is not necessary to discriminate between a real Brāhmaṇa and a real non-Brāhmaṇa? And who, indeed, is a real Brāhmaṇa? Did Sridhar or the other poor people really know that Sree Gaursundar was Vishnu Himself? Evidently they did not bother. Is such blind devotion to caste Brāhmaṇas recommended as a reliable and wholesome principle by the above episodes? Neither did Sridhar nor any of the other townsmen, who were so liberal to Sree Gaur-sundar, entertain any suspicions regarding the worth of Sree Gaursundar as recipient of their gifts. They did not venture to gauge the worth of a Brāhmaṇa by the measure of their clouded understanding. In this view their conduct was not the denial but the perfection, of the truly rational attitude. They waited to be enlightened, without muddling. This excellence of judgment was the natural concomitant of their own unworldly life which is an indispensable preparatory for the spiritual. They will thereby soon learn about the real Truth and be saved from the degrading effects of indiscriminate, worldly charity to beggars for a worldly purpose. It is the only duty of all true Brāhmaṇas to enlighten everyone who really wants to be enlightened. Unworldly conduct in every relationship of life is the only proof of the possession of

such desire. This mode of imparting enlightenment is the eternal Dispensation of Providence and it never fails to operate with unerring beneficence in all cases. Those who are charitable to Brāhmaṇas from any worldly motive never have the sight of a real Brāhmaṇa who possesses the knowledge of Godhead.

But it may be argued that Sree Gaursundar was encouraging the trade of a betel-maker by accepting his service. Is not the trade of a betel-seller altogether harmful? Will such encouragement not be misunderstood as approval of a practice which is condemned by the *Srimad Bhāgavatam*? *Srimad Bhāgavatam* warns us against sensuous enjoyment of the objects of this world and proceeds to enumerate categorically certain forms of sensuous enjoyment that are to be avoided by all means. It says no doubt that no rules are applicable to those who really serve Krishna. *Srimad Bhāgavatam* does not mean that the *bona fide* servants of Krishna are privileged to indulge in sensuous conduct. What it means is that Krishna is served by the senses of those who are perfectly unmindful of their own enjoyment. We are not required to give up anything. We are required to learn the only proper method of using everything. Till we understand this true method we should agree to be taught, by desisting from the wrong method which would otherwise prevent us from knowing truly by the only effective method, *viz.*, that of actual personal experience.

Sree Gaursundar did not declare a crusade against the externality of conduct of any kind. All activities are a part and parcel of the eternal scheme of the universe and can and need never be abolished. Sree Gaursundar desired that we should acquire the right vision which enables us to employ all things of this world in the service of Krishna, without interfering with the external appearance which is the eternal perverted concomitant reflection of the real shutting from us the true view of the Reality. But the perverted reflection can no more be abolished than the Reality. Both exist for ever in their respective reciprocal relationship. It is not they but our attitude to them that requires to be adjusted. Gaur-sundar declares that the *smārta* view, *i.e.*, the ordinary view of so-called orthodox Hindus, which regards a thing of this world as

pure or impure by its worldly reference, is opposed to the teaching of the spiritual Scriptures. Nothing can be impure except the attitude of the observer. To the pure vision everything is necessarily pure. According to the *Bhāgavatam* the *paramahansas* are above all those rules that are meant for the guidance of conditioned souls. This leniency to them means neither undue partiality nor indiscriminate licence. The Scriptures provide for the strictest guidance of all dissociable souls by the eternally free *sādhus* who alone can understand the real spirit of those regulations and can, therefore, apply them in the proper way. This is so because they themselves always spontaneously follow the spirit that is negatively represented by those regulations. The real devotees are privileged to know that for no one there is any such thing as impurity in the sphere of spiritual service. Those who, being themselves averse to Godhead, set up as teachers of the *Bhāgavatam*, delude themselves as well as their pupils by their false teachings.

The eternally free state is not a figment of the atheist's imagination. It is, on the contrary, the most decisive proof of one's utter ignorance of the state of the devotee to suppose that the true nature of such state can be realized by the imagination of one who does not serve God. It is tantamount to confounding the shadow with the substance, darkness with light; because such knowledge is real ignorance and such imaginary purity is the most insidious form of aversion to Godhead. Such deluded people bring upon themselves the richly deserved punishment that is due to their hopeless pursuit of the shadow under the wilfully mistaken plea that it is the substance. The identification of the unreal with the real, of the wrong idea with the object, is the consciously perpetrated great error of all empiric speculations regarding the Reality. It is equivalent to conscious or unconscious denial of all reality on the dishonest plea that the Reality is incomprehensible to our present limited understanding. On this misapplied plea are we justified in deliberately choosing to be content with an imaginary 'moral' order and call it also 'real' on the testimony of a gratuitously assumed *universal instinct* of the race? In other words are we to recognise the failure of our pervert reason to know the Reality by stifling the faculty of reason itself? Sree Gaursundar warns us

against such useless act of suicide and declares that the Reality really exists and can also be really known to us despite the self-created insufficiency of our present understanding; and that it is, therefore, our first and only duty to try to realise the Truth by adopting a life which is really free from all taint of duplicity. That this is also the only truly rational course and one whose success is a foregone conclusion.

On His return home after accosting Sridhar in the manner described above, Sree Gaursundar seated Himself at the door of the room that was consecrated to the worship of Vishnu. The students, who had been in attendance, departed to their respective homes. As He caught sight of the rising full moon the Lord's heart was filled with loving recollections of the Moon of Brindāvana. He thereupon began to discourse strains of the Flute, Whose sweetness is never experienced in this world. But no one could catch it except the mother.

On hearing the note of the Flute that bewitches the triple universe, the mother fainted on the spot by complete immersion in the ocean of bliss. Presently recovering her external consciousness, having composed her mind, she listened to the unprecedented melody of the Divine Flute. She perceived the sound to proceed from the direction where Gaurāngasundar was seated. Having this wonderful aural experience the mother came out of the room and found her Son still sitting at Vishnu's doorstep. She could no longer hear the strains of the Flute but beheld the Disc of the Moon in the Bosom of her Son. She saw distinctly the Sphere of the Moon inside the Breast of her Son and looked about her in amazement.

Returning to her room the mother began to think about the reason, but could not arrive at any solution. Such was the high fortune of mother Sachi who constantly beheld such never-ending Divine Manifestations. One day during the night mother Sachi heard hundreds of people singing and playing on musical instruments. She heard various musical sounds made by the mouth, the sound as of a dance, the tread of feet as if a vast *Rāsa* Pastime was in progress. One day she found that all the house, the rooms, doors

and windows, were made exclusively of light. Another day she had a sight of celestial nymphs, beautiful as Lakshmi Herself, their hands adorned with the shining lotus flower. One day she had a vision of shining gods and, after just catching sight of them, could not see them again. All these visions are nothing at all impossible in the case of the Mother Whom the *Veda* declares to be the very Form of Devotion to Vishnu. Even those, on whom the Mother casts Her auspicious glance but once, are thereby endowed with the eligibility of beholding those manifestations. Thus did Sree Gaurasundar, Wearer of the Garland of Wild Flowers, abide in His Own Eternal Joy, in concealment; such being His Pleasure. Although the Lord was manifesting Himself in all these various ways yet He could not be recognised even by any of His Own servants.

The Mothers of Sree Krishna serve the Lord as embodiments of the principle of pure reverential devotion like that of Devaki and Prisni, or by unmixed maternal affection like Yasodā and Sachi. The Mothers are not denied the transcendental un-alloyed service of Krishna although they are His superiors by relationship and are regarded as such by Krishna. It is the special privilege of the servants of Krishna to behold the manifestations of His Divine Power and Majesty. Sree Sachi Devi serves the Lord with greater devotion than His other servants. She loves Sree Gaurasundar as her Son standing in constant need of her protecting affection. This is different from the purely reverential attitude of service. In this world parental affection precludes all element of the principle of service as practised by an inferior. Even when the mother nurses her own child she cannot be supposed, without a jarring violation of all sense of propriety and truth, to be guided by a feeling of reverence for her own offspring. The two sentiments, as they are conceived in this world, are different and incompatible. In the Mothers of Krishna maternal affection perfects and incorporates, instead of excluding, the element of loyal servitude. There is no loss of any principle but only the growing excellence, by additional elements, of the one indivisible basic function which, inconceivably to us, gathers up all minute and nice distinctions that are

found pervertedly reflected in the exclusive grades of mundane relationships.

The most noticeable Feature of the Activities of Sree Gaur-sundar at this period, is Arrogance. He chose to carry the Pastime of His Arrogance to such lengths that there was at that time in the whole of Nabadwip no person who could beat Him in this respect. Commenting on this Thākur Brindāvandās is led to observe that it is the peculiar and inalienable Characteristic of Krishna that He has no equal in whatever role He chooses to play and Sree Brindāvandās Thākur proceeds to recapitulate the most notable instances of His Excesses. When the Lord chooses to indulge in the Pastime of fighting He excels all in the most perfect use of the weapons of warfare. When He wishes to indulge in amorous sports He effects the conquest of myriads of His sweet-hearts. When He desires to enjoy the pleasures of riches, the homes of His servants are filled with the most profuse abundance of all precious jewels. When, at a subsequent period, this very Arrogant Gaur-sundar renounced the world and turned a *Sannyasin*, a particle of His Renunciation was vainly to be looked for in all this triple universe. The truth of this Fact, says Thākur Brindāvandās, writing of Events that were still fresh in the minds of all the people, is patent to all. The Renunciation of Sree Gaur-sundar is never possible in any other person.

Those who represent Sree Gaur-sundar as engaged in amorous pastimes with His mistresses in the manner of His Activities of *Dvāpara Leelā*, commit an unpardonable offence against the canons of historical as well as spiritual propriety. It is directly opposed to the testimony of Sree Brindāvandās Thākur who says clearly that at this period when Sree Gaur-sundar was exhibiting the *Leelā* of a house-holder at Nabadwip He was, indeed, a most restless and mischievous Person Who was full of arrogance, but with one most significant reservation, viz., *He altogether abstained then and throughout His Career from the society or discourse of woman for indulgence in amorous pastimes as Enjoyer*. He exhibited all along the role of the ideal servant of Krishna who is exclusively devoted to his Lord and absolutely free from any hankering for enjoyment on His Own Account.

Certain sections of Sree Chaitanya's professed followers, actuated by their worldly propensity, do not hesitate even from casting the aspersion of adulterous conduct on the perfectly abstemious Character of Sree Gaurasundar. This wilful and gross misrepresentation of a historical fact only shows the depths of the utter degradation to which the human nature is liable to fall by its efforts to comprehend the Doings of the Divinity under the dictates of its irrepressible hankering for sensuous enjoyment. It is for this reason that the contemplation of the conduct of the devotees of Krishna has been extolled by the Scriptures as being of greater help to souls striving for spiritual amelioration than even the Doings of the Lord Himself; because the Latter are liable to be wholly misunderstood by those who do not properly realise the supreme necessity of being instructed therein by the transcendental preceptor who leads the perfectly unworldly life and who is thereby enabled to have the right understanding of the Divine Activities of Sree Krishna Who is altogether unintelligible even to the candid worldly mind that pretends to seek for the real Truth. By such wilful distortion of the *Leelā* of Sree Gaurasundar these insincere and thoughtless people only prevent themselves and others who are minded like themselves from realising the true nature of the genuine devotee whom it was the object of Sree Gaurasundar to make known to us by His Own Divine Conduct and Teaching. Unless and until we learn to follow the Teaching of Sree Gaurasundar we can never realise the true Nature of the Activities of the Lord in His *Avatāras* in the different Ages by reference to Their Source.

For the same reason a conditioned soul must never try to ape the transcendental conduct of the servants of Krishna; because the activities of the unalloyed devotees cannot be understood except by their mercy, that is to say except by unconditional submission with body, mind and speech to the servant of the Absolute. It is not enough to have listened to the words of the devotee without submitting to be fully guided in our every act. On the transcendental plane there is no difference between idea and word and object denoted by them. This has to be realised not by persisting to differentiate between them while undergoing discipleship under

a *sādhu*, but by submitting to realise them as an indivisible whole in our practice as well. So long as we actually retain an idea of our present disloyal conviction that they are separate from one another and that the Absolute Truth can be realised by merely exercising our intellect in the same way in which we find out the so-called truths of our worldly experience, we are doomed to deceive both ourselves and others by wilfully and profanely confounding, against the imperative dictates of our own unalloyed reason, the material with the spiritual. Or, one may fall into deception of the opposite kind and ape the external conduct of a *sādhu* without caring to listen, with sufficient attention and with a serving disposition, to his words regarding Krishna. This will make one's conduct a mechanical performance and also prevent the due realisation of the momentous fact that on the plane of the Absolute there is no such thing as unintelligibility, *i.e.*, absence of the fullest cognition. Every act of the servant of Krishna is instinct with all real cognitive significance, not in the imagined, figurative or transferred but undivided absolute sense. The words of the *sādhu* have to be *lived* if one is sincerely willing to realise their true significance. Hence there arises the necessity of complete submission to the *bona fide* spiritual guide at all stages of spiritual endeavour.

The Doings of Krishna are not cognisable even to His Own servants unless He is pleased to let them know. The activities of Sree Gaurasundar, although He exhibits the *Leelā* of the devotee, are not intelligible to any person except by means of His special Grace vouchsafed through His servants. The Arrogance of Nimai Pandit deceived everybody in regard to His Real Nature. He appeared even to the Vaishnavas as an atheistical pedant whose only ambition was to acquire the reputation of the greatest scholar of His time. They confounded Him with those really egotistic pedants who abounded in Nabadwip and who were the worst enemies of the true religion inasmuch as in their role of teachers of the Religion they supported their impieties by the authority of the Holy Scriptures. They are the *Putanās* who abound in a controversial Age and it was necessary to stop their mouths if the Religion was not to be stifled at its birth. It is the Nature

of Krishna to deal with everybody at his own weapons. He is the Servant of His servants and the Terror of His enemies.

The Ideal Devotee of Krishna, Sree Gaursundar, possessed by right of His Devotion all these Qualities of Krishna Himself. He was dealing with the atheistical teachers of religion on their own plane where alone, indeed, they could be met, although they did not deserve such aggressive mercy. But the Lord Himself must not, therefore, be supposed as belonging to their plane. By this conduct Sree Gaursundar was trying to help them in the only way that would be intelligible to them, *viz.*, by proving the insufficiency of their polemics and thereby making it clear that they could not understand the real meaning of the Scriptures.

The Pride and Arrogance of the Lord humbled even those proud and arrogant atheists who had grown hoary, in the practice of sophistry and were too bad to be reformed in any less violent way. This is the case of all empiricists, more or less, of this day or that. They really understand nothing, but always act as if they know everything. They only submit to the sophist who is a greater juggler than themselves. Such polemical defeat serves to confirm them more strongly in the wisdom of their suicidal course. But if the art of the juggler is used not to confirm but rescue the juggler from his favourite self-deception such remedial jugglery is thereby raised to the level of the service of Krishna Who wishes to rescue all perverse souls by their own co-operating free choice. Sree Gaursundar set the example of such service in His *Leelā* as ideal House-holder and Teacher. It is the duty of all scholars and teachers, if they want to be saved from self-deception and to prevent others from being deceived by their pedantic untruths, to accept unreservedly the service of the Absolute Truth as the only goal of their endeavours, and, when they find Him, to assert Him against all who parade such untruths as the medicine authorized by the scriptures of all the ills of our mortal estate. If this ideal of teachership were adopted it would really cure all distempers that the flesh is heir to, which can be healed by no other method.

The distinctive feature of the Teaching of Sree Gaursundar is Causeless and Unbounded Mercy to all souls. The very

Fullness of His Mercy stands in the way of the realisation of its nature and specially by those pedantic worldlings who are proud of their own mis-supposed worth and are thereby led to prescribe their nostrums for the undoing of their unfortunate admirers. Those who mechanically follow the dictums of *Vaishnavism* or Revealed Religion, *i.e.*, all Pharisees also necessarily fail to understand the supreme Mercy of Sree Gaur-sundar. Sree Gaur-sundar sets no value on conduct that is not inspired by unalloyed love for the Absolute. He teaches the function that breaks through all rules and conventions for the purpose of acting up to the Fountainhead of all rules and conventions. He sets His Face against all forms of self-complacency that is unduly vain of its laurels. The pure soul knows no inferior and has no taste for pedantic sophistry for procuring any worldly laurels. He strives under all circumstances, to realise the unconditional service of the Absolute. He has no selfish inclination and no suspicion that anything may not benefit himself. He knows spontaneously by his open-hearted experience of the Reality that to serve the Absolute in all manner and under all circumstances, is the only proper function. The service of the Absolute is capable of being realised and equally liable to be missed, under every form. Those who fix their attention on the external form, can never understand the behaviour of the real servants of the Absolute. No Pharisee can understand why Godhead sends the pouring showers of His Mercy on the just and the unjust. In this case the Nature of the Source from Whom the conduct proceeds, spiritualizes the whole act. Those who confound spirit with matter, the Absolute with the relative, cannot understand, due to want of candour, how that which is apparently opposed to their experience of this world, can be *necessarily True* on the plane of the Absolute. But their stupidity happily does not abolish the Truth Himself. The arrogance of the Pharisee misjudges the quality of the Magnanimous Arrogance of Sree Gaur-sundar. This is the wholly deserved punishment of the hypocrite. It is the only method by which even the Pharisee is saved and those who are needlessly vain of their worldly virtues, are enlightened regarding their real function towards others.

It is the Nature of Krishna to excel every entity in whatever He does, with a single exception. Krishna is always excelled by His devotee. One day the Lord happened to be passing along the public streets in the company of a number of His students who crowded on all sides of Him. The Lord was as richly dressed as a king. He was clad in a yellow robe, like Krishna. His Lips were dyed with the betel and His Holy Face had the splendour of a million Moons. All the people were praising Him. They said, 'He is verily the God of Love Himself Who has put on His Visible Body.' On His Forehead shone the *tilaka* mark pointing upwards. His Beautiful Hands held His books. The Glance of His Lotus Eyes dispelled all sorrow. The Lord was coming along merrily, swinging His Arms, in the company of His students who were naturally of a most restless disposition. Sribās Pandit, fell in with Him on the way quite by accident and burst into laughter as he caught sight of the Lord. Nimāi Pandit made obeisance to Sribās. The generous Sribās blessed Him by way of response saying, 'Live Thou for ever.' Sribās then laughingly asked, 'Whither goest Thou, Crest-jewel of the Arrogant? Why waste Thy time in these vanities forego to serve Krishna? Why dost Thou teach Thy students so, night and day without respite? Why do people read at all? Is it not to learn devotion to Krishna? If that is not gained what does such learning avail? For this reason be well-advised not pass all Thy time in such vanity. Thou hast studied till now. It is high time for Thee to serve Krishna without delay.' The Lord replied smiling, 'Be assured, revered Pandit, what you say will certainly come to pass by your grace.' Saying this the Lord proceeded smiling to the bank of the Ganges and there re-joined the body of His pupils.

Sribās Pandit, a Brāhmaṇa advanced in years, was accustomed to treat Sree Gaursundar in the manner of a superior and well-wisher who regarded his junior as an object of his affectionate concern. Regarded from the point of view of reverential service such conduct towards Godhead must appear as improper. The same kind of objection would apply equally to Sāndipani Muni, teacher of Krishna, to Garga Muni who was family-priest of the chief of Braja and, in *Gaur-Leelā*, to Brahmānanda Puri, co-dis-

ciple of Sree Isvara Puri. It is, however, a comparatively poor conception of our relationship with Krishna to suppose that it should be confined to distant reverence for the High and Mighty Godhead.

The idea of the Absolute involved in the forms of reverential worship, is somewhat analogous to our conduct in this world where the sentiment of reverence precludes all really familiar intimacy. If a person who is situated on the plane of this world affects to conduct himself towards Krishna as towards his Chum or Junior he certainly perpetrates the grossest impropriety. The psilanthropists (*prākṛita sahajiyās*) pretend to think that it is possible to adopt the attitude of confidential intimacy found in this world towards Sree Krishna while we are in the sinful state in imaginary imitation of the similar feasible relationships of the absolute world without committing the grossest profanation. At the same time it would be no less untrue to suppose that the method of distant reverence itself is, therefore, the only or proper kind of service of the Divinity.

The method of distant reverence is based on an incomplete view of the Absolute and does not therefore, belong to the highest plane. It is shy and diffident. It is also indicative of a certain reserve of love. Reverential service is of course not to be confounded with any form of hypocritical psilanthropism. It is wholly free from all error of judgment and is bound to develop by directing its closer attention to its immature service of the Absolute. Contented reverential service, nevertheless, resembles that of the overjoyed traveller who builds his halfway house and prepares to settle down in it permanently under the impression that he has reached the goal. It is not easy to persuade such a traveller to resume his forward journey, especially if he has already built a solid structure and is supported by a strong body of admirers and colleagues of real purity of purpose. This is the form of service that is attainable in the Majestic Realm of Vai-kunṭha which supplies the ideal of the current religions. The latter are, however, really a veiled form of quasi-worldliness and often tantamounts to a religious refusal to seek the fullest service of the Absolute. Reverential worship especially in its degenerate

forms, has proved the determined foe of all impartial and thorough enquiry in the domain of religion, no less effective than the *pseudo-authoritative* methods that were once prevalent in the sphere of worldly knowledge. This unnatural form of worldliness aping the real service of Vaikuntha has been accepted as the only legitimate form of religion by all worldly persons who have been prepared to justify their practices by a sort of ridiculous assumption that religion is necessarily opposed to science, *i.e.*, to the principle of free enquiry. But neither need the defects of the current forms of religious orthodoxy lead any but a deliberately foolish or wicked person to the serious conclusion that there is no such thing as the Absolute Truth Whose Admitted existence is certainly the only real obstacle in the way of all irresponsible free thinking so much affected by empiricists.

CHAPTER XIII

THE IDEAL HOUSEHOLDER

PROFESSOR Nimāi used to stroll in the streets of the city in the company of His pupils. Men of the highest rank stepped down from their conveyances to accost Him as they came across Him on His way and made obeisance to His Feet with all humility. All persons felt an instinctive awe on meeting the Lord. There was none in the whole of Nabadwip who did not now unreservedly admit His pre-eminence as a scholar. Whenever a citizen performed any religious function he made it a point, as was the custom of the times, to send offerings of food and clothing to the House of the Lord.

Householder Nimāi Pandit was most open-handed in spending money. With Lordly Magnanimity He gave to the needy and the distressed unceasingly and without stint. Gaur-Hari thus gave away rice, clothing and money to the poor most generously whenever He chanced to meet them. There was a constant arrival of chance-guests at the House of the Lord. The Lord gave to all in the measure due to each. Sometimes a dozen or score of *sannyāsins* would turn up all on a sudden. The Lord would joyfully invite them all to His House sending word to His mother for immediately providing the alms of cooked food for a score of *sannyāsins*. His mother was sometimes put to great perplexity for want of sufficient eatables in the House for meeting these peremptory demands of her Son. But such anxiety was always relieved by the automatic arrival of all requisites from unknown quarters.

Lakshmi Devi would then cook the food most gladly and with special care. The Lord Personally watched Her cooking and Personally attended to the feeding of the *sannyāsins*, never relaxing His attentions till their actual departure. He spared no pains to please His guests. The merciful Lord welcomed every chance-guest in this hospitable manner. The Supreme Lord

taught all householders, by His Own Example, their most distinctive function. ‘The principal duty of every householder,’ said the Lord, ‘is to serve all his chance-guests. I call that person even worse than birds and beasts who, being a householder, does not serve his chance-guests. If one happens to be destitute of every necessary by reason of ill-luck due to his previous bad deeds, he should still gladly spread for the chance-guest some straw as a seat, and offer him water and resting ground. No good man can be without these. Let such a person speak out truly and let him express his regret for not being able to do more. Such loyal conduct would save him from the terrible offence of inhospitality. If one serves sincerely and with a glad heart according to his means his proper duty to his chance-guest is thereby duly performed.’ Thus taught Sree Gaursundar and His Own Conduct bears out His Teaching.

Thākur Brindāvandās, commenting on the above, observes that those chance-guests to whom Lakshmi and Nārāyana made the gift of their food, were certainly most fortunate. Even Brahmā himself and his following always pin their hopes of deliverance on food from the Hands of the Lord Himself. This supremely coveted food was obtained by any and every chance-comer. It was truly most wonderful! There are those who opine otherwise. These maintain that no lesser beings are ever in any way eligible to be recipients of such food; and the Brahma, Siva, Suka, Vyāsa, Nārada, and the head of all the gods, all the self-realised souls and all eternally free souls came thither in the forms of mendicants, apprised of the Appearance of Lakshmi and Nārāyana at Nabadvip. Otherwise who else have power to be there? Who else but Brahmā and those who are on a level with him, can ever be fit to obtain that food? Others, however, hold that the Descent of the Lord into this world was for the Purpose of delivering all the miserable. The Lord ever relieves the distressed in every way. Brahmā and the other gods are His own limbs, and the limbs of those limbs. They are ever and in every way the associates of the Lord. But there is His Own special promise regarding this particular Appearance, ‘I will give all jivas what is attainable with difficulty by Brahmā and his

peers.' It is for this reason that the Lord offered His food at His own House to all the distressed.

Charity to the poor and unstinted hospitality to all chance-guests are recommended by the Scriptures as the *principal* duty of all householders. The *Varnāshrama* system permits a person to marry, set up as a householder and pursue an honest trade or profession for earning his livelihood. But no householder must cook any food for his own consumption. He must always cook only for the Lord. Neither should he amass wealth for the livelihood of himself and his family. He may accumulate wealth in order to relieve the distressed and for performing the duty of unstinted hospitality to all chance-guests.

Miserliness is unreservedly condemned. A Brāhmaṇa, i.e., one who sincerely professes to lead a regulated spiritual life, is distinguished by this quality of liberality in the spending of his wealth. He must be perfectly open-handed. It is his nature and also his duty, to employ his wealth for relieving distress. It is his duty to give liberally food, clothing and money. It is also his duty to serve and accumulate a certain amount of wealth for this purpose. It is his duty to give with an easy mind. There is no higher duty for a householder than this.

This is clearly opposed to the ideal of the worldly economists who favour the method of niggardly 'doles' for *relieving* (?) distress. Indiscriminate or lavish charity is considered by the Economists as harmful both to the giver and the recipient of such charity. The recipient of indiscriminate charity is supposed to be encouraged thereby to lead the idle life of a parasite. The giver of such charity is accordingly supposed to be a conscious or an unconscious abetter of unprincipled idleness. It is, therefore, supposed to be the duty of a householder not to countenance any form of begging. That form of charity alone is permitted by the Economists which is exercised for helping people to lead an industrious life. This discrimination is strongly inculcated by all modern Economists. But Sree Chaitanya makes no reservation in regard to hospitality to chance-guests.

As a matter of fact the charitable disposition itself assorts ill with the principle of discrimination. Is a professional beggar

really a great nuisance as he is ordinarily supposed to be by the Economists? He is the inevitable product of the practice recommended by the uncharitable Economist. He is the natural and salutary (?) check on the social triumph of undiluted industrialism. Would the world be an ideal place if it be inhabited solely by uncharitable, rich misers? Is not miserliness after all quite as definitely and logically traceable to the same selfish instinct that produces the professional beggar at the other end? Those who discourage indiscriminate charity indirectly encourage miserliness by their depreciation of the vice of improvidence. The economic view cannot be free from this grave defect.

The real danger of all those who live to eat, is due to their besetting desire for the cultivation of undiluted selfishness. This latter is the root-cause of all economic and other troubles of this world. It is, therefore, necessary to insist that the householder must give up the ideal of calculated selfishness if he is to be really at peace with himself and the world. The miser need not suppose that he is a better man than the beggar. Both of them are in equal danger of becoming selfish by the avoidance of their duty by one another. The householder can be cured of his selfishness not by so-called discriminate or no charity, but only by true magnanimity.

Those who advocate saving in order to increase the capital of a country only extend the application of the principle of exclusive selfishness to the sphere of national economy with its corresponding disastrous result. A nation which lives only to eat, is no better than the uncharitable householder whose case has been considered above. The bubble of the fashionable capitalistic theory will be pricked, and is in course of being pricked, by the rival principle of unselfish brotherly co-operation, for multiplying the so-called necessaries and luxuries, for a higher purpose than that of selfish enjoyment by the nation or the individual. That higher purpose is unreserved service of Godhead, which, however, cannot be understood by those who are too exclusively absorbed in the pursuit of the alternative lines of the selfish ideal.

But it may be urged that the ideal of unselfish living sketched above, has also its danger. An unselfish individual and nation

are liable to be exploited by the selfish. This is no doubt true. But is it really harmful to any party? The *varnāshrama* system was never properly followed in this country. It is bound to be recognised as the best social arrangement possible in this world, and as the only one that offers the least opposition to the goal of spiritual living.

The special hospitality shown by Sree Gaursundar to *sannyāsins* points to a spiritual duty on the part of the householder who aims at the attainment of a higher than the merely economic plane of living. By the practice of open-door hospitality alone the householder is brought into proper touch with those who keep up the ideal of spiritual service of the Lord in the form that is least likely to be misunderstood by the economic householder.

The institution of *asceticism*. (*sannyāsa*) is the distinguishing feature of the *varnāshrama* system. It is the fourth stage in the life of a person belonging to the system; the other three being *Brahmacharya* (period of spiritual training), *Garhastya* (householder life) and *Vanaprastha* (period of retirement from domestic life). The *Yati* or *sannyāsin* does not cook for himself. He may accept food cooked by the twice-born, who, being worshippers of Vishnu, cook only for the Lord. No articles of food may be offered to Vishnu that may cause pain to any sentient being or stimulate animal passion. Hence there should be no objection on the part of *sannyāsins* to accept food cooked by Brāhmaṇa householders.

But no *sannyāsin* may settle down at any place other than the Abode of the Lord. A *sannyāsin* must continuously move from place to place for the benefit of those who lead a stationary life. A *sannyāsin* has no other purpose than to serve the Pleasure of Vishnu. He is the *Guru* or spiritual Guide of all persons belonging to the other three stages. It is the duty of every householder to hospitably receive him with the greatest honour. It is the duty of the householder to offer his best hospitality to the *sannyāsin* who is always a chance-guest. It is also his duty to receive the *sannyāsins* with the greatest honour that is due to the order of the spiritual teachers of society.

The *sannyāsin* is the chance-guest whom Sree Gaursundar specifically teaches all householders as in duty bound to honour. According to the *varnāshrama* system no person is to be permitted to live for himself. The professional beggars are no exception to this rule. But neither the professional beggar nor the self-centred householder is a fit member of the society that is organised for serving the spiritual end, although they are tolerated and given the chance of improvement by the generous provision of the system. The loyal members of the system never live unto themselves, and are, therefore, neither selfish householders nor professional beggars; although all householders are required by the system to tolerate and cherish even disloyal persons for the purpose of mutual improvement.

The professional beggar and miserly householder necessarily claim the lion's share of hospitality of every loyal household in a society in which they happen to form the majority of members. It is not laid down in the *Shāstras* that there is any obligatory duty of hospitality towards those guests who insist on staying at a place for more than a single day at a time. From this provision it appears that the obligatory duty of householders towards chance-guests really refers to the *sannyāsins*. The poor and the distressed are also mentioned by the *Shāstras* as objects of charity. But it is carefully laid down that charitable gifts to such persons would benefit the giver and the receiver in the worldly sense only. But the hospitality to the chance-guest is recommended on the ground that it produces spiritual benefit to the householder without the necessity of his having to try to find out *sādhus* by undertaking journeys that are also enjoined to holy places where only the *sādhus* are to be ordinarily met with. Every householder was provided by means of such organised hospitality with the opportunity of spiritual communion with the *sādhus* coming to his door by serving them for his own benefit. In this duty all members of his family could also participate and be benefited thereby. It is not merely social benefit which would be secured by this practice, but an inclination for the spiritual service of the Lord without which no so-called social good is worth a brass farthing.

The institution of *sannyāsins* is, of course, also liable to degenerate. Those *sannyāsins* who do not serve the Lord, are even

worse than mere professional beggars. There has been an enormous increase of both species of beggars, as is to be expected in this world. But those professional beggars who pass themselves off as *sannyāsins* in order to exploit the religious homage of the good householders, are also liable to be benefited by having to conform to the rules of the order which require every *sannyāsin* to keep aloof from all association with the other sex and strictly discourage all accumulation of wealth, fixity of habitation and luxurious living. Those professional beggars with the garb of *sannyāsins* who observe none of these rules, should be regarded as mere scoundrels who must not certainly be honoured as the spiritual teachers of the community. But it should be possible for every householder, with a clear realisation of the true principles of the *varnashrama* system, to practise unstinted charity and good will towards all persons in the measure that is due to each. But the claim of *pseudo-sannyāsins*, to be the authorized spiritual teachers of the community, should not also be seriously entertained on any *Shāstric* principle. They may be sent away with kind words and outward respect due to their garb and may be given the bare necessities of life of which they may actually stand in need.

There is, however, another and a higher aspect of the matter. Sree Goursundar was playing the part of a devotee in the position of a householder. Those who were the recipients of the favour of His hospitality were undoubtedly most fortunate. Who then could be those who are really worthy of such high fortune? Do Brahmā and other great beings on a level with Brahmā stand in need of such favour? Even they, say the Scriptures, fail to attain the supreme mercy of such favour. Judged by the test of eligibility, however, they ought to have a preferential claim to such favour. So it is maintained by those who take this view that the Householder *Lecā* of the Supreme Lord, acting the part of the ideal devotee, was intended for favouring Brahmā and other great personages, who availed the opportunity by presenting themselves in the garb of chance-guests and beggars in distress.

Food, clothing, rice, a seat, anything offered by the Lord has power to benefit everyone in the fullest measure. Brahmā and other great beings are no exceptions to the rule. There can be

no true greatness save by the Favour of the Lord. One who attains such greatness by Divine Grace is enabled to realise more and more the infinite mercy involved in the eternal necessity of having to be the recipients of the Divine Favour. Unless the Lord is pleased by one's activity it has no value whatsoever. Its contribution to the Pleasure of the Lord constitutes the sole and supreme value of all activity for the lowest of *jivas*, as for the highest. Those who want to serve the Lord without desiring to be favoured, have a very poor idea of spiritual service. It is by all means the only natural function of the soul to desire the Divine Favour in every way. It is unnatural for the soul to desire any favour from any other quarter. Those who have no hankering for the Divine Favour, can have no experience of His Real Nature. This fatal stupor is curable only by the Causeless Mercy of the Lord which is apparently unnecessarily and indiscriminately showered on all. Those *jivas* who fail to be reclaimed by the Divine Favour, have equal reason to be grateful to the Supreme Lord Who mercifully permits the fullest liberty of choice to all souls even against His Own perfectly beneficent Dispensation.

It was, therefore, no departure from the principle of absolute causelessness of the manifestation of Divine Mercy, but really the most brilliant fulfilment, that is noticeable in the Activities of the Supreme Lord as Householder, in bestowing His Favour, coveted by Brahmā, Siva, and all highest personages, indiscriminately on all. This Conduct of the Supreme Lord also places before us, in true amplitude, the incalculable range of the beneficence of the activities of the *bona fide* Vāishnava householder. The Lord's purpose was to vindicate the function of His devotee. The favour of His devotee is superior in the quality of graciousness even to that of the Lord Himself. The devotee is eternally engaged in doing good, of which the recipients are unconscious, to those fallen souls who are deliberately opposed to the willing service of the Lord. This unsolicited favour from His devotee is the sole unknown cause of eligibility for the conscious and willing service of the Lord that is slowly manifested in all conditioned souls who are thus favoured. Rice, clothing and money which conditioned souls readily accept from the Vāishnava householder under

the merciful pressure of destitution or even from the desire to beg by assuming the garb of a spiritual mendicant, possess the power of healing our aversion to the Lord that is equal to that of the direct Mercy vouchsafed by the Lord Himself to conscious and grateful recipients.

Everything possessed by a Vaishnava householder belongs wholly to the Lord in the special sense that the devotee is fully conscious of the sole proprietorship of the Lord and is also eligible to act up to his conviction. His charity is, therefore, to be distinguished from that of one who usurps a thing by the right of *pseudo*-proprietorship. Whatever is, therefore, accepted, given away or retained by the true devotee, is done on behalf of the Lord and, therefore, possesses the spiritual quality, imparted to an object due to its spiritual dedication to the service of the Lord, *viz.*, that of delivering those concerned in the same from the bondage of this world. The food that is offered by the devotee to the Lord is called *mahāprasādam* after acceptance by the Lord. Those who accept *mahāprasādam* thereby consciously or unconsciously progress towards the activity of spiritual service. The remainder of the *mahāprasādam*, after being honoured by the devotee, is termed *maha-mahāprasādam*, who possesses even greater efficacy than the *prasādam* as he produces faith in the spiritual nature of the devotee. All this is implied in the Hospitable Activities of the Lord acting the part of a Vaishnava householder.

If any trace of doubt is still left in the minds as regards the necessity of a Vaishnava householder serving Vaishnava *sannyāsins* arriving at his house as chance-guests, it may be observed that the Vaishnava householder does not aspire to favour, help or benefit any body but *serves* all persons with whom he has any dealings. One who fancies himself to be a Vaishnava is a hypocrite. The Vaishnava is really and fully aware of his inferiority to every other entity all of whom are viewed by him as objects engaged in the service of the Lord who are to be honoured as properties and servants of his Master. The devotee alone is, therefore, fully eligible for consciously serving the Vaishnava *sannyāsins* and understands the real value of their mercy in visiting unsolicited the homes of

householders under the Direction of the Lord, in order to afford them an opportunity of serving the Lord in the best manner by showing hospitality to themselves. This function of hospitality is capable of being fully discharged only by the Vaishnava-householder who is in a position to understand its necessity and high value for all concerned.

From the point of view of the householder the spiritual value of the obligatory duty of hospitality to all chance-guests consists in its being the necessary supplement of the begging and peripatetic guiding function of the *sannyāsins*. The value of such hospitality increases in proportion as its significance is realised and embodied in the act. The external activity is liable to be abused by the misconception of its real nature. But the abrogation of the duty which is so emphatically and clearly enjoined by the *Shāstras* on all householders involves the fatal danger of breeding disbelief in the spiritual principle. One, who is really anxious to find out the duty of a householder, should be careful to avoid the mistakes of supposing it to be a merely mechanical activity on the one hand or as the product of designing hypocrisy or ignorant simplicity on the other. The householder should exercise his hospitality discriminately and must always pay due attention to the spiritual import. The modern institutions of public almshouses, hospitals and other charitable organisations err by trying to remove only the worldly miseries and wants of those whom they desire to serve. The husk is ostentatiously dangled before the greedy imaginations of self-deluded souls who are deliberately disposed to prefer it to the grain which tastes bitter to their diseased palates. These institutions, if they are to do the maximum good to mankind, should change their principles of management and objective by subordinating *unconditionally* the worldly point of view to the spiritual. The present discriminating worldly charity which they dispense, should give place to indiscriminate spiritual charity. This applies equally to individual householders who make a show of benefiting the needy and the destitute and other chance-guests by practising covert arrogance in the name of serving hospitality. To the purely worldly understanding, the product and the punishment of egotistic vanity which is the proper negation of the

principle of spiritual service, these considerations are unfortunately apt to seem visionary and unpractical. Those who deliberately choose to regard the perverted reflection as being itself the substance of which it really happens to be the shadow, have no other alternative but to continue to behave perversely.

Lakshmi Devi cooked the meals of the family by Herself, unassisted, and yet experienced the greatest happiness in the performance of this duty. Most fortunate mother Sachi, watching this Behaviour of Lakshmi, felt a great and hourly increase of her gladness. From early dawn Lakshmi performed all the duties of the household alone by Himself. This was Her Nature, or *Religion*. She drew the circles of the *svastika* in the shrine for Godhead and the figures of the *Conch* and the *Disc* with great care. She made every preparation for the worship of the Lord by perfumes, flowers, incense, lighted lamp and well-scented water. She constantly served the *tulasi* and applied Her Mind, with even greater assiduity, to the service of Sachi Devi.

By observing this Conduct of Lakshmi Sree Gaursundar did not say anything openly, but felt glad at Heart. On some days, taking into Her Arms the Feet of the Lord, Lakshmi Devi would continue to tend Them for a while. Once Sachi had a most wonderful vision. She saw a most brilliant massive tongue of fire burning under the Feet of her Son. On some days mother Sachi scented a great perfume of the lotus flower everywhere about the rooms, doors and windows, that also never ceased. Thus at Nabadwip abode Lakshmi and Nārāyana hiding Themselves and so no one could know. Then, after sometime had passed in this manner, the Lord, Who is ever full of every wish, had a desire of beholding the country of East Bengal. The Lord thereupon spoke to His mother to the effect that He intended to go out of Home for a few days. Sree Gaursundar said to Lakshmi to serve the mother unceasingly. Thereafter the Lord, taking with Him a few favoured students, started for East Bengal, with great Pleasure.

In the above paragraph I have tried to reproduce the words of *Sree Brindāvandās Thākur*. They afford a glimpse into the ideal of the relationship of the loyal wife to her God-fearing husband in this world. Sree Lakshmi Devi is the ideal servant of Her

Husband's Household. There is no one else to assist her. Mother Sachi as well as Sree Gaur-sundar are recipients of Her help. She occupies the unconditional subordinate position. There is no question of *equality* of status or function. Her duties lie within the household and are not shared by Her Husband or mother-in-law. Her principal work is to make careful arrangements for the worship of Vishnu, decorate His shrine by drawing the figures that are emblematic of the Powers of the Lord, tend the *tulasi* and attend constantly on Sachi Devi. She cooks and serves the meals offered by the family to Godhead. She tends the Feet of Sree Gaur-sundar. She works from early dawn till late at night. She does all this with a perfectly loyal and glad heart.

This is no doubt wholly opposed to worldly ideas regarding the proper position of the wife in the household of her husband. It appeals to neither the inundate intellect nor to the mundane con-nubial sentiment. The life seems to be too mechanical, too narrow and too much subordinated. It does not at all provide for the bodily and mental comforts of the wife. It severely curtails the sphere of her activities to the inside of the house of her husband. There is no variety of work, no provision for leisure or other re-creation. There is strangely enough little reference to the sexual conjugal love. It may not be unnaturally supposed that all this may be convenient from the point of view of the elders but are not likely to be relished either by the husband or, least of all, by the over-worked wife herself who is crushed by a system of sheer, joyless, purposeless slavery which can only make her gradually lose even the energy of making any piteous protests. The mother-in-law is the standing dread of a worldly wife who considers it physically impossible to please superimposed elderly mistress at her elbow whose tastes are bound to differ radically from hers.

The difference between willing rational service and slavery is real and need not be overlooked. If one submits to another from a sense of duty and in pursuance of a rational object such submission becomes necessarily differentiated from slavery. The quantity or nature of the work that may be performed is no proof of its slavish character. What should be the proper object of every household? The atheistic conception seems to be that the household is the pro-

duct of the sensuous outlook and its object is to satisfy our mundane cravings in an effective manner. Work and leisure according to such view, should be so arranged that no undue excess of either may produce harmful bodily or mental discomfort. Liberty of choice in the selection of work and the method of its performance is regarded as the keystone of the arch of social and domestic felicity; although the danger of dyarchy in both domestic and social government is also admitted. The two objectives of the household system of this democratic Age of equality are maximum personal liberty and maximum personal comfort of every inmate. The out-look is of course worldly. Those who are disposed to defend the system of *purdāh* and subordination of the wife to her husband, do so because they believe that the worldly ends are likely to be better served by the adoption of those methods.

As a matter of fact inequality in work, temperament and ability are hard facts of our everyday experience, that cannot be abolished by simply overlooking their existence from a conviction of the sheer impossibility of harmonising all discordant differences. If the object of the household institution be to secure the maximum possible worldly enjoyment for every member, it is not possible to devise any arrangement by which this is really attainable. The full cup of domestic happiness is liable to be dashed in an instant by a solitary whisper and the mischief cannot be healed by the *shibboleths* of liberty and equality, or by the elaborate cunning of a complicated worldliness. The worldly end in itself is the Tantalus's Cup and it gives its deluding character to all the details of the system. It is the worldly end which really destroys the peace of the household and is bound to prevent the attainment of any really satisfactory result.

The sole object of the household institution should be to serve the Supreme Lord if it is the purpose to produce real peace and harmony possible only by spiritual association. Neither the wife nor any other member should aim at personal comfort, nor should be encouraged to do so. But it is not possible to instil into any individual member the principle of unselfishness unless the same forms also the accepted principle of all members of the household. The service of the Supreme Lord alone can impress upon all unselfish

persons, the necessity and desirability of its adoption as the *only* unconditional common function of all members of every household

The Supreme Lord can be served only if He happens to be a Person essentially like overselves if He condescends to receive our service. But it does not remove all difficulties, although it establishes the reality of the serving function.

If the service of the Lord resembles the so-called service that is ordinarily offered to a human being the difficulties connected with the latter will recur in the proposed function. A human being normally desires the satisfaction of his personal needs and is prepared to do willingly what promises such satisfaction. The only difficulty in his case is that he does not know what can actually satisfy him. He is constantly in search of such satisfaction by the adoption of the available defective methods, due to his natural want of judgment and capacity. It is for this reason that he is doomed to suffer from perpetual dissatisfaction. Moreover, there is no reasonable guarantee that the methods adopted by him, for the unattainable ideal of complete personal satisfaction of himself as a human being, will be, in every case, promotive of the similar satisfaction of those whose services he must require for his purpose. This uncertainty in regard to both is reflected in the modern democratic cry of liberty and equality, showing that those interests have not been served by the unchecked pursuit of selfish happiness by each individual human being, however high the individualistic ideal may be regarded to be in the abstract. But the proposed democratic method has also its own defects. It quite unnaturally ignores all real differences of capacity, taste and character of the individuals. No lasting habitable structure can be expected to be built on radically unnatural and fallacious assumptions. The attempt is bound to produce fresh causes of discord and disappointment.

The common service of the Supreme Lord should be acceptable if it be really free from the above defects and thus ensure the attainment of the maximum satisfaction of the individual and the community. Vishnu is the Only Person Whose Plans for His Own Personal Satisfaction are ever productive of a perennial variety of conditions of the highest and lasting general and individual satis-

factions of all *jivas*. The Plans of Vishnu benefit everybody, even those who wilfully abstain from receiving the benefit from a deliberate misunderstanding of the Nature of the Divine Personality. The atheists are mistaken in being afraid of losing their independence of action if they have to unconditionally obey the Lord. If they have no rational objection to unconditionally obeying their own real nature they can have none to obeying the Lord. By obeying the Lord all souls are enabled to attain the complete natural function of their own proper selves. By disobeying Him the soul ceases to find either himself or his function. This is proved indirectly by the futility of every effort to institute the perfect household by the misguided soul's own independent effort, by ignoring his natural relationship to his Lord. The service of the Lord is the source of all knowledge, all existence and all satisfaction of all souls. If we do not submit to serve Him we *naturally* grope in utter darkness by mistaking darkness for light. The object of every endeavour of every soul should be to seek for the Divine Guidance if he really wants to attain his complete normal existence. The service of the Lord should, therefore, be the only legitimate object of all household and social institutions.

In the House-hold of Sree Gaursundar every function was performed for pleasing the Supreme Lord. The practice of conjugal love is one of the most coveted objects of worldly life. It is also liable to degenerate into an abnormality due to the sensual nature of depraved man who is impelled by lust to deceive himself in regard to his sexual responsibilities. Marriage is a failure if it be regarded as a means of satisfying one's carnal appetites. The wedded husband and wife should not be less free from the offence of sexuality than the bachelor. They marry with the object of attaining perfect immunity from carnality by adopting the regulated conjugal life that leads to this spiritual result. Such conduct for such purpose is practised in the service of the Supreme Lord. But this natural function can also be neither learnt nor practised except under spiritual guidance. The unassisted mentality of tiny individual souls does not enable them to realise their own supreme good. The rationality of the reason of man can itself be realised only by being rationalised by the All-knowledge and by consciously sharing

in serving His Cosmic Plan. It is only in this way that one can escape the tyranny of his own native littleness.

Religion is not a departmental affair, nor the special business of any particular set of people. It is the practice of the service of the Truth in all affairs. But the Truth cannot be fully served by the limited cognition of the conditioned soul. The Truth in His Proper Nature is always Full and Immutable and is known only to the Supreme Soul Who has also the power *to communicate* Himself to the multitude of individual souls. The Truth cannot be known if one acts in opposition to the source of rationality.

Conduct which is irrational is also improper and unnatural for a rational being. There can be no other test of impropriety. All conduct, therefore, ceases to be rational as soon as it neglects to receive inspiration from the Source of all knowledge. No act can be irrational or undesirable that is done in conscious obedience to the Will of the Absolute. The domestic duties of the loyal wife cease to be drudgery and slavishness if they are performed in conformity with the Wishes of the Supreme Lord. The leisure, liberty and comforts of the worldly wife are the means of confirming her taste for dissipations that are bound to react in a most mischievous manner on her real self and on the souls of her aiders and abettors.

The service of the Lord, Who is perfectly free from all defects, is the only natural function of the pure cognitive essence of the free soul. In every work that a truly rational being undertakes there can be only one object, *viz.*, to realise and carry out the Wishes of Godhead. The Conduct of Sree Lakshmi Devi belongs to the plane of the unconditional loving service of the Lord. The unity and concord of the household are fully secured by the willing and indefatigable exertions of the loyal God-fearing wife, and, at the same time, the only function of a perfectly rational existence in the form of the practice of loving devotion of Godhead is realised for herself by the service of those who thus employ her in their service of Godhead. If Sachi Devi had any desire for selfish enjoyment she would have failed to have such high regard for her Daughter-in-law. She accepted the services rendered to her by Sree Lakshmi Devi in the spirit in which they were render-

ed, *viz.*, in order to honour her Divine Husband's mother who possessed the spontaneous absorbing serving affection for her Divine Son. Sree Lakshmi Devi loved her Husband on the plane that is absolutely free from all mundane passions attainable to one who is wholly dedicated to the service of the Lord. The Lord responded to Her serving love by pursuing the Role of the ideal Devotee Who serves Krishna with all his faculties. But at the bottom of it all lay Her actual relationship with the Divine Personality, the fulfilment of Whose Wishes tantamounts to the successful performance of one's whole duty.

The work of a menial is looked down upon, but it can never be banished from this world. It is similarly easy enough to sneer at the loyal wife who sets herself with *perfect satisfacion* to the exclusive performance of ordinary domestic duties. But the food cooked by Sree Lakshmi Devi is accepted by the Lord and benefits all who partake of the remains of the Lord's Meal. The rich food cooked by atheists may minister to the pleasures of the palate of an epicurian, but is never the *Great Grace (mahaprasadam)* of the Lord that the other is. The humblest work that is performed for the Lord has the greatest potency and more than fully satisfies the utmost needs of all the faculties of our souls, because it is most fully free and rational. This makes spiritual conduct eternally different from the worldly and absolutely unintelligible to all worldlings.

The personal subordination of the wife to the good husband makes her the mistress of the household in the sense that she is thereby enabled to have the right of serving every member in the way that is in keeping with the spiritual purpose. If she aspires to be the mistress in the sense of being allowed the right to lord it over the household, her position from the spiritual point of view would be worse than useless, inasmuch as she would altogether cease to render any service to the Lord. On the spiritual plane the only admissible position for the soul is that of the servant of servants. In such case, however, neither the wife nor the husband is really servant or master of one another. Both are servants and servants of the servants of their common and only Lord. Any difference in the nature of their respective forms of service.

does not affect their natural status of exclusive servants of the Lord. Failure of duty towards the Lord would result if either party misunderstands his or her real status as servant of the Lord. Those who suppose that any authority can be exercised by any of us by the right of selfish enjoyment (the worldly sense of mastership), are thereby led to quarrel about precedence and status. In the spiritual institution of the household precedence is accorded to the female over the male in the service of the servant of the Lord. The wife is truly honoured above all other members in this way. This is the Divine Dispensation and is intended to curb the vanity of mastership and mistressship that are inborn to the conditioned state which is disposed to exploit the difference of sex for selfish enjoyment. There would thus be no difficulty if we regard the arrangement enjoined by the *Shāstras* from the point of view of our mutual service to our common and only Master.

The personal service which was rendered by Sree Lakshmi Devi to Her Husband may be objected to by those females who are unduly addicted to sensuous enjoyment under the impression that it is the goal of all human endeavour. Such persons may be disposed to think that the life led by Sree Lakshmi Devi was too formal or too respectful or wanting in the qualities of sympathy and affection. But everyone will easily perceive the exquisite propriety of Her Conduct as being in perfect conformity with the requirements of the very highest spiritual service.

This brings us to an important issue. The relationship of sensuous enjoyment is *wholly* forbidden to the conditioned soul although it alone necessarily appears to him or her as the one thing needful. In place of such relationship, which prevails in this world, and which is the root cause of all troubles of conditioned souls, is to be substituted the relationship of common service of the Supreme Lord by the employment of the senses not for the gratification of one another but for the sole satisfaction of their only legitimate Enjoyer. This institution of marriage is intended to lead to the realisation of this relationship of spiritual service in the matter of sexual conduct. This is realised by honestly following the injunctions of the *Shāstras* against the natural dictates of our worldly inclination. Enjoyment is the right reserved

for the Supreme Lord, because He alone is the only Master. He alone possesses real Authority over all persons and its exercise also does not, for this reason, involve any untoward consequences. The true rational order of spiritual cosmos is set at naught by the unnatural proprietary ambitions of conditioned souls, who are by their spiritual nature, servants, of every spiritual entity and can never be the lords of any entity; because every entity, including themselves, is the exclusive servant of the Supreme Lord.

The failure to realise the spiritual import of the Conduct of Sree Lakshmi Devi, is responsible for the sexual excesses that are sometimes practised under the garb of following loyally the conduct of Sree Gaur-sundar as Householder. Sree Gaur-sundar was pleased with the Conduct of Sree Lakshmi Devi because it was in accordance with His Own Purpose and showed His Pleasure by commanding Her to serve Sree Sachi Devi during His sojourn in East Bengal. Sree Gaur-sundar did not reward the loyal services of Sree Lakshmi Devi by relaxing His strictly regulated Conduct towards Her, but by giving Her further opportunities of service of a higher order. The service of the servant of the Lord is higher than the direct service of the Lord Himself. Whenever the Supreme Lord is pleased with the devoted service of a soul He shows His appreciation of such devotion by conferring on him the higher privilege of serving His servants. The mother of Sree Gaur-sundar serves the Lord, by the practice of parental affection. Sree Lakshmi Devi and Sree Tulasi Devi also serve the Lord by their respective aptitudes as consort and maid. Sree Lakshmi Devi also served Sree Tulasi. She now gave Her whole service to Sree Sachi Devi. It was no disrespect to Sree Tulasi Devi on the part of Sree Lakshmi Devi to prefer the service of Sree Sachi Devi to that of Sree Tulasi, inasmuch as Sree Tulasi occupies a position of inferiority to the Mother of Godhead in the scale of reverence. As a matter of fact, however, the apparent indifference shown to the service of Sree Tulasi by Sree Lakshmi Devi in comparison with her reverential and constant attendance on Sree Sachi Devi, was the better way of serving also Sree Tulasi.

The Activities of Sree Gaur-sundar are, however, not fully grasped in all their surpassing excellence unless we remember the

cardinal fact that He is actually the Supreme Lord Himself. Sree Lakshmi Devi is the Eternal Consort of the Supreme Lord. The inexpressible Mercy of these Activities of the Divine Pair consists in this that They play the roles of *jīva* souls, endeavouring to practice the exclusive service of the Lord in this world. The Lord does not appear in His Role of Enjoyer, lest He be misunderstood. But we are so grossly addicted to sensuous enjoyment that there are not wanting persons among us who have not scrupled to seek to detect the presence of mundane sensuous propensity even in this wonderfully transparent and unambiguous Behaviour of Sree Gaur-sundar towards Sree Lakshmi Devi.

Sree Thākur Brindāvandās dwells lovingly on the incidents of the sojourn of the Lord in Eastern Bengal in the company of His students. The Lord progressed in His journey to East Bengal by slow stages. No one, who had the good fortune of witnessing the Lord on His journey, could take away his eyes from Him. Females on catching Sight of the Lord expressed the opinion that 'it is really worth while for the Mother Whose Son is He to have been born at all. Let us therefore, do humble obeisance to the Feet of His Mother. That Maiden Who has obtained such Husband, is also most fortunate. That excellent Lady has obtained the highest goal of Her womanly birth.' Thus praised repeatedly and without stint every male and female who chanced to meet the Lord on His journey. The Sight of the Lord, Whom gods aspire to behold, was available to all persons.

In this manner, moving slowly forward, Sree Gaur-sundar reached the bank of the Padmāvati, in course of several days' journey. The Padmāvati possesses the charming beauty of her mighty waves and excellent banks which look as if planted with orchards. As the Lord caught sight of Padmāvati He sportively plunged into her water with His followers. From that day, sings Thākur Brindāvandās, fortunate Padmāvati acquired the efficacy to sanctify all the world.

The river Padmāvati is a most beautiful sight. Her waves, banks and strong current are most captivating. The Lord beheld the Padmāvati, to her great good fortune, with the greatest Pleasure, and took up His residence on her bank. The Padmāvati thus

obtained the same high favour which had fallen to the lot of the Daughter of Janhu (the Bhāgirathi). The Lord with His followers bathed daily in the water of the Padmāvati and sported with the greatest ardour in her stream, just in the same way as He had done in the Ganges.

Gaurchandra stayed for sometime in the country of Vanga. It is for this reason that East Bengal is a blessed land to this day. The Lord abode on the bank of the Padmāvati. All the people were very much gladdened by the happy tidings of His Appearance in their midst. The tidings quickly spread in all directions that the Greatest of Professors, Nimāi Pandit, had arrived in the country. All those worthy Brāhmaṇas, who were really fortunate, soon presented themselves before the Lord with appropriate offerings for the teacher for admission to the high privilege of His Teaching. As they presented themselves before the Lord they made their humble obeisance and supplicated for His favour with great humility to the effect that 'it is by our great good fortune that it has come to happen that Thou hast appeared in this country. The selfsame Person to Whom we are wont to resort for our studies carrying with us our treasure and family to distant Nabadwip, that rare Treasure Himself, has been brought Bodily to our own door by the Mercy of Godhead. Thou art the visible Incarnation of Brihaspati himself. There is no other Professor who is like Thee. Even the parallel of Brihaspati is not worthy of Thee. Thou seemst to be an Integral Portion of Godhead Himself, as no one except the Divinity can ever possess such scholarship and may attract so irresistibly the mind and treasure of all of us. We pray to Thee for the gift of a little learning to all of us. May we humbly submit, Best of the Twice-born, that all of us do study and teach by the help of Thy annotations and have thereby received already the indirect benefit of Thy most valuable instructions. May Thou be pleased to make us also Thy direct disciples that Thy Fame may pervade the whole world.' The Lord encouraged them by His Smile and for a period, condescended to enact His Pastimes of Teacher in the country of East Bengal. 'By the force of this most fortunate event,' writes Thākūr Brindāvandās, 'even to

this day, all over the country of Bengal, males and females perform the congregational *kirtan* instituted by Sree Chaitanya.'

The place, where Sree Gaursundar took up His residence during His stay in Eastern Bengal, is not mentioned in any of the available records. Some maintain that it is the village of Magdobā in the district of Faridpur. It is necessary to note that the practice of the congregational *kirtan* initiated by Sree Chaitanya, in which both males and females took a part, was found to be already well-established in different parts of East Bengal shortly after the Disappearance of Lord Chaitanya when Thākūr Brindāvandās wrote his immortal work. Thākūr Brindāvandās's account gives us the further interesting information that Nimāi Pandit was the Author of a gloss on the *Kalāpa Vyākarana* which was extensively used in the *tois* of Eastern Bengal. But we have not yet come across any copy of the gloss if, indeed, one was ever actually penned by Sree Chaitanya.

This puts it beyond all doubt that the Fame of Nimāi Pandit as Professor is far from being a myth concocted by His Ignorant followers. The fact that the country of East Bengal with its great river was actually sanctified by the Visit of the Supreme Lord, although the spiritual contention may not be really acceptable to the atheistical understanding, is the really momentous feature of the whole episode. There cannot be a greater fortune for a country than the Personal Presence of the Lord on its soil. The result is spiritual and eternal but is impossible to trace in a form that appeals to the heart of persons immersed in secular affairs. There may come a time when it will be possible to write the inner history of the wonderful vicissitudes of conditioned souls during their sojourn in this world from before the beginning of Time. The peripatetic Tour of Nimāi Pandit in East Bengal will appear in the true perspective in such a Narrative as fraught with consequences that are not measurable in terms of any mundane value. It is necessary for the purpose of the present account to hint at the associated result. The land trod by the Lotus Feet of Sree Chaitanya becomes the Hallowed *Tirtha* which it is the bounden duty of all Vaishnavas to visit. The country which is cherished by the

Vaishnavas is afforded the only chance of attaining to the pure service of the Lord.

The Lord was seen, as He really is, by many fortunate inhabitants of East Bengal, both male and female. The females realised Him as the ideal Son and Husband. In the literature of the sect which calls itself '*Gaur-nāgaris*' the fact, so clearly stated by Sree Brindāvandās Thākur, has been wilfully distorted in order to suit their theory that Nimāi Pandit excited the passion of unconventional amour in all female beholders. But Nimāi Pandit was the Ideal Husband and Son and the Teacher by *His Own Personal Example* of the spiritual necessity of absolute abstinence from sexuality. The Supreme Lord in His Pastimes as Sree Chaitanya does not appear in His Role of Enjoyer and Proprietor of all things. Sree Chaitanya is not Sree Krishna as Lover of others, but Sree Krishna as loving Himself. The two roles are wholly different and cannot be confounded with one another. One who loves the Lord has no desire for his own enjoyment; whereas the Lord Himself possesses an infinite desire for every form of enjoyment. The insatiable desire for enjoyment of the Lord provides the perennial opportunity of His service to all pure souls. It was the object of Sree Chaitanya to show by His Own Conduct how this service is to be performed by the pure souls. For the conditioned soul accordingly the *Leela* of Sree Chaitanya is unambiguously wholesome as affording him the chance of learning the service of the Supreme Lord by His Own Guidance and Example. It is, therefore, necessary to be on one's guard against any wilful distortion of the nature of these Supremely Magnanimous Activities of the Lord. They are not identical with, but correspondent to, the Dvāpara *Leela* of Sree Krishna. The necessity of this caution will appear from a consideration of the following facts recorded by Thākur Brindāvandās to warn us against the fatal consequences of misrepresenting the Teachings of Sree Chaitanya from worldly motives.

It is, of course, not possible for any except the specially fortunate to understand the Transcendental Activities of the Divinity. It is no undue disparagement of the nature of the conditioned soul to declare that he has *no chance of understanding the Ways of Providence by his own puny effort*. That, which becomes intel-

ligible to the reason of man by its assertive exertions, is necessarily limited. We are fatally disposed to be complacently content with such knowledge (?) as comes to us in the shape of our so-called *acquisitions*. But they are not the Whole Truth. That which is limited, that is to say exceeded or contained by the limited reason of man, is rejected by his soul as unnecessary and worthless, the moment its limited character is clearly demonstrated. So there is a constitutional spiritual hankering for the limitless in our proper selves. This hankering also imperatively demands complete satisfaction. Such satisfaction is declared by all the scriptures to be realisable by the method of submissive acceptance of the grace of the transcendental teacher. We feel no hesitation to submit to the teacher(?) of the limited and are also proud to be the slaves of the laws of Nature. But when it is proposed that we should submit to the Unlimited *or, in other words, be really free, we vehemently object to the process on the ground that we are likely to lose our birth-right of freedom by being deprived of the slavery of Physical Nature.* It is this disloyal irrationality that is the only stumbling block in our way and which prevents us, more effectively than we are ever sincerely prepared to admit, from having *any* access to the actual Realm of the Absolute. There are very few persons, indeed, who are not too obsessed by such misconceptions not to misunderstand the logic of the argument set forth above; and fewer persons still who are prepared to act up to it in practice.

The people of East Bengal, enlightened by the Mercy of Sree Gaursundar, adopted the method of congregational chanting of the Name of Hari as the true universal method of worshipping God-head. But no sooner did they accept the *form* of the pure religion than they were victimised by a regular succession of *pseudo-saviours*. Even by the time of Thākur Brindāvandās there had already arisen quite a large number of these pretenders to saviourship and they had actually done a good deal of positive harm. One of these degraded wretches in order to gain his livelihood passed himself off as Raghunāth, the *Āvatār* of Vishnu. Another sinner persuaded the people to sing *him* as Nārāyana by giving up the congregational chant of Krishna established by Sree Gaursundar.

Commenting on the doings of these profane hoary rascals Thākur Brindāvandās notes the height of absurdity of people, who are so entirely at the mercy of Physical Nature that she makes them change their point of view three times in course of every day, being able to induce *any* one to mistake such ROGUES as themselves as the Supreme Lord. There was one of these devils, a *pseudo*-Brāhmaṇa, in the country of Rarh, who wore the mask of a Brāhmaṇa but was really a savage cannibal. This particular rascal had the audacity of making the people call *him* 'Gopāla' (the Divine Cow-Boy Krishna); for which reason he was nick-named the '*Shiāla*' (fox) by the people.

Thākur Bindāvandās uses very strong language, indeed, in his open condemnation of the practices of both these pretenders to saviourship and their deluded followers. He is specially grieved for the latter, declaring that the wretch who accepts *any* person as Godhead *in lieu of Sree Chaitanya*, is the worse criminal of the two. He then solemnly exhorts all persons 'to accept as true the *facts* that Gaurāṅga Sree Hari is the Lord of the infinity of worlds, that all bondage wears off by the mere recollection of His Name, that one triumphs over all adverse circumstances if he but recollects even His servants. The Praises of the Lord are sung by the whole world. It is imperatively necessary to serve the Feet of the Lord after the manner of Himself, by discarding the wrong path.'

The danger from *pseudo*-saviours is twofold. They (1) induce the people to give up the worship of the Lord and (2) make their victims serve their own vile selves. The method that was adopted for gaining these ends was outwardly similar to that of Sree Chaitanyadeva. Thy also prescribed the congregational chanting of the name of Godhead meaning themselves. 'Sree Chaitanya is Godhead Himself. There is no impropriety in chanting His Name. There would be the most fatal dereliction of one's duty if one disbelieves the Divinity of Sree Chaitanya. The only duty of all His followers is to proclaim this Truth to all the world in the clearest possible manner so that no one may suffer by missing the excellent opportunity of serving the Supreme Lord in the only feasible way in this controversial Age which is devoid of natural faith. Those people who do not believe in the Divinity of

Sree Chaitanya, are alone unfortunate, as they are prevented from adopting the *only* method of attaining the transcendental service of Godhead. This is the sad lot of the Sceptics. There is, however, a lot that is even worse than that of the Sceptics, *viz.*, that which befalls the disloyal over-credulous. They allow themselves to be misled by the sufficiently transparent artifices of audacious rascals who know very well how to exploit their weakness. The true course lies midway between these extremes. The conduct and speech of the followers of Sree Chaitanya are, indeed, liable to be misunderstood by the hypocrites and their victims, in opposite ways. The atheistic credulous are apt to be misled by rascals who pass themselves off as Godhead for their *utter* want of faith in Sree Chaitanya. The faith in Sree Chaitanya is to be attained by avoiding the defects of disloyal credulity on the one hand and of scoffing incredulity on the other. It is, therefore, necessary to be cautiously but fully open to real enlightenment. But the case of those unfortunate people who are over-credulous on principle is the most deplorable of all, inasmuch as they are *sure* to fall into the clutches of those hypocritical rascals whose business it is to lead all those, who deliberately *seek* the untruth, still further away from the Truth. The only way of avoiding this danger is not to court it by neglecting the proper exercise of one's natural sense of right and wrong and by not following in all sincerity what really appears to be the right path even to our present imperfect judgment. The only right conduct, which also should spontaneously suggest itself to all persons so conducting themselves, is the cultivation of exclusive association with those who actually lead the spiritual life by avoidance of all unspiritual company. By such conduct the innate tendency for the service of the Truth is strengthened and the chance of benefiting by the instructions of the *bona fide sādhus*, who come to every seeker of their own accord, is decisively increased.

But it is not till one has the opportunity of the right kind of personal association with *sādhus* that he has any substantive chance of spiritual enlightenment, *i.e.*, of realising his natural faith in the *Active Existence* of Personal Godhead. One who seeks to undergo the necessary training for being fitted for the spiritual

service of the Supreme Lord, can obtain real and effective help in this Age from no one else except 'Sree Chaitanya. But it is reserved only for those who are sincere seekers of the Absolute Truth to realise this. One may be very dull or very intelligent, as the world goes. Such dullness and cleverness will equally help or retard one's progress on the spiritual path according as he is sincerely disposed to serve. The *theory* of good conduct is related to *substantive* good conduct itself, as shadow to substance. The substance necessarily includes the shadow, but not *vice versa*. Right conduct is the practice of *substantive* sincerity. Those who are disposed to undervalue actual conduct regarding it as external are liable to overlook this all-important consideration. External conduct can *alone* feed the inner enlightenment by the process of concrete actual growing *experience* of the reality. The experience of the service of the Lord resulting from conduct possesses far greater enlightening power than the experience of worldly affairs, inasmuch as on the spiritual plane conduct and theory are really *identical*. A dull person who sincerely acts under the direction of a *sādhu*, attains the spiritual vision in much the same time that is taken by an intelligent person who is equally sincere. Worldly dullness does not stand in the way of obtaining the service of the Godhead, provided there is no deliberate insincerity. The dull person is never made intelligent in the worldly sense by his spiritual enlightenment. He still appears to be very dull to worldly people who are devoid of all true intelligence and incapable of understanding the perfectly cognisant spiritual conduct of the *bona fide* servant of the Lord.

That, which appears to be wrong or right to the stultified conscience of the conditioned soul, is undoubtedly true for the time being, although the hollow and ephemeral nature of empiric ethical conduct must be patent to every one who feels the slightest inclination for the ethical principle. Spiritual conduct is not mechanically attained either by practising or by discarding the empiric ethical conduct. In the conditioned state, ethical conduct with the necessary safeguards should be undoubtedly obligatory and one, who may be wantonly disposed to disregard the rules of morality, should be regarded as a real menace not only to

social but also to spiritual well-being, and such conduct should be punished by all means. This will also automatically prevent the exploitation of the unthinking masses by the otherwise formidable gang of the *pseudo*-religionists. It is absolutely necessary to try resolutely to avoid this last-mentioned danger. But one should at the same time be careful not to fall into the blunder of supposing that empiric morality is the absolute principle or that social or domestic well-being is the *summum bonum* of human life. If the standpoint from which the moralist regards life be incapable of affording us a view of the Truth, in spite of any passing conveniences that may seem to result from its adoption, it should be the bounden duty of the human reason to seek for further enlightenment. Such an attempt may, indeed, show our want of absolute faith in the conclusions of empiric morality. But it is not antagonistic to the empiric moral principle. On the contrary it marks the stage of distinct ethical progress embodying as it does the conviction that speculative morality does not take us far enough towards the attainment of the goal vaguely proposed by such morality.

Spiritual conduct, indeed, must not be imagined as identical with the empiric moral conduct, nor as its derivative. By the cultivation of so-called moral living the spiritual life is not positively realisable. Moral life is the imaginary *Ultima Thule* of the advocates of so-called worldly well-being. The vision of the empiric moralists cannot pass the bounding line of the horizon of this world. The principles of empiric morality have a limited and temporary value. They are rehabilitated, not supplemented by the laws of spiritual living. One, who is truly anxious for spiritual enlightenment must, therefore, be prepared also for a thorough re-adjustment of his moral conduct both as regards its external manifestation and internal attitude. This change will not coincide with the requirements of the really irrational form of living striven for by the worldly minded ethical person and may even be found fault with by those who are thoughtless enough to imagine the correlative worldly principle to be the obligatory rule of human conduct. Such opposition is beside the point and has always to be reckoned with by all sincere seekers of the service.

of the Absolute Truth. It has its value for the negative well-being of the world in forcing the spiritual novice to explain his purpose to his opponents in an intelligible form thus helping the diffusion of the knowledge of the Truth and preventing hasty adoption of untruth that is found to parade in the garb of truth in this world.

But one may also commit the no less fatal blunder of waiting too long to embrace the Truth when He actually presents Himself by pretending to be cautious. If this is hypocrisy or idleness, as is often the case, such a procedure will not help one's progress towards the Truth. It is necessary to be sincerely prepared to firmly discard all untruth and to accept *actively* the Truth at all time in proportion to our real convictions. One who does not do so, is still the unreclaimed egotist who has not yet to acquire the salutary ambition for seeking to become an humble and active servant of the Absolute Truth. A seeker of the active service of the Truth should also be prepared to commit an infinity of mistakes in his honest endeavour to find Him. Indifference and idleness are the masked forms of hostility to the principle of spiritual service and have to be most carefully avoided by all who are truly desirous of attaining the service of the Truth.

The Lord stayed for two months in East Bengal moving about in different directions, always taking a particular interest in visiting the river Padmāvati. There was a great resuscitation of sound erudition by His scholastic exertions. Hundreds of persons returned to their homes gaining their diploma by a brief course of study under the Lord;—such is the wonderful Power of Sree Chaitanya. The whole of East Bengal rushed to the Feet of Nimāi Pandit for the acquisition of learning. Thousands of persons in this manner became the disciples of the Lord; and it is impossible to ascertain the number of those who obtained the blessing of His Teaching.

Meanwhile at Nabadwip Lakshmi Devi was very much distressed in Her heart by separation from Her Lord. She did not divulge Her condition to any one. She constantly served the mother. She tasted no food since the departure of the Lord but only made a show of accepting food as a mere formality. She was stricken at heart with the deepest grief by separation from Her Lord. She

wept all through the nights by Herself. Sree Lakshmi Devi got no respite from Her great anxiety even for a moment. She at last felt the separation to be wholly unbearable and wished to make Her way to the presence of Her Lord. Thereupon, leaving behind in this world a body resembling Her Own Transcendental Form, Lakshmi Devi silently betook Herself to the Side of Her Husband, eluding the notice of everybody. Holding closely to Her heart the Lotus Feet of the Lord, Lakshmi Devi thus found Her way to the bank of the holy Ganges, in the state of beatific contemplation.

Thākur Brindāvandās has refrained from describing the grief of Sree Sachi Devi at the Disappearance of Lakshmi, remarking that the cries of the mother melted even hearts of wood. The neighbours were very much pained by hearing of the departure of Sree Lakshmi Devi and turned up to do their customary duties by the departed.

The term used in the *Shāstras* to denote the Consort of Godhead is '*Shakti*' which may be rendered as '*Power*'. Godhead is the Possessor, or Lord, of all *Powers*. The Power of the Supreme Lord wears a twofold aspect and serves Him in apparently opposite ways. There is in the first place the spiritual Aspect. This is the Enlightening Aspect of the Divine Power and it is this Aspect that is directly obeyed by all *bona fide* servants of the Lord. There is also the deluding, Material or Limiting Aspect. This Aspect is of the nature of the Shadow of the Spiritual Aspect and as such manifests Herself at the opposite pole as the negative and subordinate form of the Spiritual Aspect. This second Aspect is called in the *Shāstras* '*Māyā Shakti*' or the '*limiting*' Power; while the Spiritual Aspect is called '*Chit Shakti*' or Cognitive Power. The two are not really separate, as the material Aspect is a correlative and wholly under the control of the Spiritual Power. The *bona fide* servants of the Supreme Lord are not under the necessity of obeying His Material or Limiting Power. Sree Lakshmi Devi is the Plenary Aspect of the Spiritual Power of the Lord.

The relation of the Spiritual Power to the Supreme Lord, Who bears the Name of Sree Krishna, is one of indivisibility. Sree Krishna as the Lord of His '*Chit Shakti*' is the Possessor

and Controller of Power by means of the Divine Will, while Sree Lakshmi Devi, the Spiritual Power of the Lord, is the Executrix of the Divine Will. Between the Divine Will and the Agency of His execution there is no difference of category, the One automatically and fully implying the Other. Sree Lakshmi Devi is the Plenary Power of Sree Krishna, representing the Will of Her Lord and carrying out the Same in regard to the secondary powers. *Māyā*, or the Material Power, is the Negative, Deluding Face of the Spiritual Power for the performance of a subordinate function that is secondary of correcting the paltry perversity of dissociated souls, and, for this reason, being necessarily superfluous in the Spiritual Realm. The Material Power is comparable in Her action to the operation of a piece of cloud on the broad bosom of the spotless sky preventing the conditioned souls of this phenomenal world from obtaining a view of the Great Sun Sree Krishna. The cloud devised by *Māyā* is a very, very small part of the Cosmic arrangement, serving the Spiritual Power in a negative capacity for the sustenance of disloyal souls and correcting their perversity by providing the congenial scope for its indulgence. *Māyā* has to employ deception in order to correct, without resorting to any violence, the perversity of the dissociated soul due to the abuse of his freedom to choose his own course. But this necessity to deceive has no place in the economy of the Spiritual Universe.

We are in this place concerned with the question of the intervention of the Spiritual Power in the benighted sphere under the penal jurisdiction of *Māyā*. This is the *Descent (Avatāra)* of Sree Krishna into this world. For this Purpose the Lord employs the smallest fraction of His Spiritual Power, or sends down Those Infinity of Plenary Divine Forms of His Own Who serve in diverse ways the Various Purposes of His Endless Activities, or He Himself comes down into this world. Sree Lakshmi Devi, the Eternal Consort of the Lord, executes all these Purposes of the Lord through every degree and variety of Her co-ordinate manifestation. She is identical with the Divine Activity.

But the Principle which constitutes the bond between Sree Lakshmi Devi and the Supreme Lord, is not one of mechanical

submission and domination. It is not at all like the relationship that exists in this phenomenal world between material power and its deluded possessor or slave. Neither is it the so-called rational submission which is conceivable by the perverted reason of the conditional soul. The Principle is expressed in the *Shāstras* by the term '*prema*' ordinarily rendered into the English word '*love*', although the word '*love*' does not possess the spiritual significance of '*prema*'. '*Prema*', or 'spiritual love', may be defined as the principle of conduct that aims exclusively and causelessly at the gratification of the Spiritual Senses of Krishna. Unspiritual love (*kārma*) is defined as the principle that aims at the gratification of the material senses of non-Krishna, *i.e.*, of the agent himself.

Divine Personality, as conceived by the conditioned soul, is a profanation. The worldly notion of personality is radically unwholesome, being made of material stuff. It is not possible for the conditioned soul to conceive of personality except in terms of a physical body bound to a sensuous mind delighting in its inextricable union with the former. This gross conception of personality also finds its way into the empiric attempt to conceive a Personal Godhead. The unwillingness on the part of empiricists to recognise the Divine Personality, is due to their apprehension of the inevitable presence of grossness in the personal conception itself. They naturally hesitate to extend to the Supreme Entity, Who is declared by the Scriptures and the innate sense of all humanity to be free from the least taint of unwholesomeness, the degrading notion of personality that is conceivable to the reason of the conditioned soul. But there would be no ground for such hesitation if the Divine Personality were found to be really such as to make Him not only altogether free from our actual gross experience of personality of this world, but in perfect keeping with the highest requirements of our unbiased reason, which can never be really satisfied with its hypothetical concoctions, and also with the declarations of the Scriptures.

The conditioned soul, posing as a person, is possessed of two conjoined sets of apparatus called indiscriminately in the English language, by the same word, *viz.*, 'senses'. The *internal*, cognitive, sense-principle operates on the external world, in the conditioned

state, by an external process of physical perception through the medium of the physical sense-organs directed and supplemented by the re-action of the material mind which educes the subtle entities of percepts and concepts from the gross impressions of external objects supplied initially by the physical organs. The 'personality' of the conditioned soul is empirically supposed to consist definitely and concretely of the enveloping material principles and processes of the mind and the physical sense-organs directed to the objects of phenomenal Nature and tending to material gratification realisable in terms of the same by the inner conscious principle which remains otherwise passive. The unwholesome element of such personality consists in its material sensuousness. The inner conscious principle, by *seeking* to establish his affinity with the objects of phenomenal Nature, is ultimately responsible for the perpetuation of the super-imposed unwholesome *ego* thus realised as the individual personality which is condemned by the spiritual pro-personalists and the empiric impersonalists alike.

Psilanthropism is the result of the unpardonable and sacrilegious attempt to make an ideal of this *pseudo*-personality and to thrust it also on the Divinity Himself. This is not always unaccompanied by a suspicion of the incongruity of such attempt. But the psilanthropists fall into this utterly profane error by striving to escape by a natural impulse from the suicidal alternative of the acceptance of the principle of impersonality proposed by the logical school of Empiricism. But by confounding the mundane for the Divine they prove to be even worse enemies of theism than the impersonalists.

The tragedy of the profession of the spiritual(?) nature the mundane personality is due to the incongruous association of soul with matter in the state of bondage. The conditioned soul deliberately seeks sensuous gratification, which is foreign to his own spiritual nature, by making the world serve the pleasures of the senses. The principle on which he is made to set to work in such a process is supplied by his deluded assumption that he is proprietor, or enjoyer, of this material world. But the role which is thus attempted is one that is foreign to the real nature of the *jīva* soul.

This proposed proprietorship means the domination of the infinitesimally little over the Infinitely Great. Such a process can by its nature be only delusive and disappointing. If the tiny soul *allows* himself *to be dominated* by the Supreme Soul he suffers from no such self-elected difficulty. The Supreme Soul can find the employment for the tiny soul that relieves the latter from the necessity of seeking the impossible unnatural paltry satisfaction of the gross physical senses. In the perfectly pure rational existence the subordination of the really little to the really Great is realised as being necessarily natural and congenial. It is the unnatural domination of the non-rational and the non-Great that demoralises the soul in the conditioned state. The only cure of the aberrations of this frail so-called mundane personality is, therefore, supplied by the arrangement of the *positive spiritual service* of the supreme Soul by the little souls, *not mechanically* as proposed by the *Smartas*, *for the purpose of the gratification of the physical senses, nor impersonally which tantamounts to self-destruction* but for the infinitely higher purpose of *seeking* the gratification of the *Spiritual Senses* of the Supreme Person Who is the necessarily Absolute Proprietor of everything.

The Supreme *Dominating Person* can also be served positively and consciously by reciprocal *dominated* personalities and only negatively and unconsciously by impersonal entities. Hence the real reciprocal spiritual personality of his willing servants, or *powers*, is proved. The relation of the individual soul to the Supreme Soul is not identical with, but the reciprocal of the relationship of the Supreme Soul to the *jiva*. Sree Lakshmi Devi seeks the gratification of the Senses of Sree Krishna by an infinite number of complementary little personalities of various dimensions and specifications acting in perfect harmony for ministering to the pleasure of the Perfect Senses of Sree Krishna. The Personality of Sree Lakshmi Devi is not one of enjoyer but of provider of the Enjoyment of Sree Krishna and She serves *only* the Pleasure of Krishna. This reciprocal function in its twofold aspect, is '*prema*' or '*spiritual love*'.

So when the Supreme Lord intervenes Personally in the affairs of this mundane world for the deliverance of conditioned

souls Sree Lakshmi Devi ever accompanies Him and carries out the Wishes of Her Lord towards the *jīva* souls.

This is the real background of the picture drawn by Thākur Brindāvandās. But the role that Sree Lakshmi Devi has to play as the consort of the ideal householder-devotee during his sojourn, by command of the Lord, in this material world, is only One Aspect of Her Divine Function as the Eternal Consort of Her Supreme Husband in the Realm of the Absolute. She is *the servant of the Servant* of the Lord. She has to minister to the pleasure of the Supreme Lord under the direction of Himself as Servant in the role of Householder. She must not, therefore, regard Her Husband as *identical* with the Supreme Lord in His Nature of Absolute Proprietor. She must not suppose that Her Husband stands in need of, or has any inclination for, enjoyment of any kind *for* Himself. Her Function as the Consort of the Devotee corresponds to that of Her Husband, Both acting the part of *Associated Servants* of the Supreme Lord in Their Roles of Husband and Wife of Each other, in order to teach the deluded wives and husbands of this world their proper relationship to one another in conformity with their absolute loyalty to Krishna.

Her pang of separation is, therefore, inexplicable on the supposition that Sree Lakshmi Devi actually experienced the discomforts of a *mortal* wife placed in a similar circumstance; although Her Conduct seems to be due to such motive. Her Disappearance from this world, which is ascribed to the intensity of Her Sorrow, also calls for a little explanation to prevent any gross misunderstanding.

Sree Lakshmi Devi was engaged in tending Sree Sachi Devi by Command of Sree Gaursundar during His tour of East Bengal. By refusing to take food and drink and forming the resolution of deliberately starving Herself to death (?) to put an end to Her own grief, She might be supposed to have been apparently *neglecting the duty assigned to Her by Her Husband*. To this the Conduct of Sree Vishnupriyā Devi, after Renunciation of the Lord and also subsequently to His Disappearance from this world, would seem to be a great contrast.

The duty of a faithful wife whose husband is abroad, as laid down in the *Shāstras*, is to eschew all comforts for herself and keep her mind perpetually fixed on her absent husband. By this means she would be enabled to retain and augment the constancy and intensity of her love for her husband. A wife may be faithful to her husband either quite causelessly out of pure love, or from a sense of duty, or for her own selfish happiness. The wife, who loves her husband causelessly, is supposed to be the ideal wife; while one, who minds her own advantage in caring for her husband, is regarded as a hypocrite. But none of these have any reference to the service of the Supreme Lord. If the husband himself be a servant of Vishnu it is only then that the conduct of the wife, *who seeks to assist him in such service*, necessarily also attains the level of service of the Divinity. In this case any love, duty or indifference, shown to the husband personally, without any conscious realisation of his function as servant of the Lord, would also seem at first sight to fall short of the full service of Krishna. This brings us really to the dangerous ground. It is, of course, possible for his wife to be carnally attached to a Vaishnava husband. If it be so, what will be the consequence of such attachment? A Vaishnava by his very nature can never be a participant in the carnality of his wife. There can, therefore, be no chance of reciprocal carnality in such a case, as the wife would receive no encouragement to follow her suicidal course. There would then remain the chance of her own regeneration if her attachment to the Vaishnava husband, although due to carnal motive, induces her to serve him faithfully through all apparent neglect on his part. This will tend to establish that real contact between the two which will be undoubtedly beneficial for both, *if the husband continues true to the Lord*. Even if in such a case the wife be not enabled to attain to the conscious service of the Lord she would unconsciously take a long stride in the direction of such service. If, therefore, the husband be a true Vaishnava a path is opened thereby even to a carnally disposed wife to attain to the spiritual condition by serving him *in a friendly way*. Any service rendered to a Vaishnava from any kind of *friendly* motive, is rewarded by the attainment of the *summum bonum*. On the other hand the only conduct, that is really obstructive of the spiri-

tual well-being of any person, is that inspired by disinclination to serve the Vaishnavas or a positive inclination to oppose or vilify them.

The spiritual service of Krishna offers unfettered freedom of choice to everybody as regards the form in which it is to be rendered. The only thing needed is *absence of conscious aversion to the Lord or to His servants, and especially the latter.* Any aversion shown to the servants of the Lord is fatal for the same reason that makes any form of friendly attachment to him a means of assured safety. There is no other way for the deliverance of conditioned souls except by serving the servants of the Lord, who appear in our midst and who by command of the Lord graciously accept any and every form of service for the well-being of all sinners *without exception.*

Therefore, judged from the point of view of the wife of the ideal house-holder-devotee the conduct of Sree Lakshmi Devi is self-protected against all adverse criticism for the reason that it happened to be of the nature of an intense friendly attachment for the Servant of the Lord. Her Role was, therefore, exactly in keeping with the Purpose of the Lord Himself and vital for clearing up most serious misconceptions on the subject of one's duty by a Vaishnava.

The Departure of Sree Lakshmi Devi to Her Own Realm of Vaikuntha did not in anyway obstruct the Activities of the Lord. The loyal wife of the most rabid worldling can desire for no more pleasant exit from this world than was exhibited by Sree Lakshmi Devi without any of the unwholesome factors that are necessarily associated with the departure of the sinner.

But as a matter of fact the mode of Disappearance from this world of the Supreme Lord and His Eternal Consorts, servitors and paraphernalia is altogether different from the death of a mortal. The art of the magician furnishes the nearest parallel of the Divine Activity. The magician performs the feat of dying in his own person to the view of the spectators without really dying at all. Sree Lakshmi Devi deluded the people into believing that they witnessed Her death to the detail of cremating her supposed dead body, independently of any change to Herself. The crea-

tion of an actual physical body was not necessary as the Eternal Consort of the Lord is the Mistress of physical Nature and performs all Her Spiritual Acts, even in this world, without any positive help of the Deluding Material Energy, Who is Her Own subservient Shadow.

But the Grief of Sree Lakshmi Devi, which was the cause of Her Departure, was not a pretence. The Lord has the Power of making Himself invisible even to Sree Lakshmi Devi Herself. The Grief of Sree Lakshmi Devi is, however, not like the grief of conditioned souls who are pained by being deprived of their opportunity of selfish enjoyment. Sree Lakshmi Devi is the Eternally Inseparable Consort of the Supreme Lord, but is nevertheless not identical with Him. It is this which makes possible Their Relationship of Love in Union and Separation. She has Her Existence in the Divine Function of causeless loving service of the Supreme Lord. She serves the Lord equally both in union and separation. So there is no decrease of love or bliss but only a change of the form of service when Sree Lakshmi Devi displays the extreme Grief of Separation from Her Only Lord.

CHAPTER XIV

TAPAN MISRA: RETURN FROM EAST BENGAL

AFTER staying for a while in East Bengal the Lord made up His mind to return Home. On being apprised of the intention of the Lord the people of those parts brought various offerings of all their treasure. The presents included gold, silver, pots for holding water, excellent seats, finely dyed blankets, a great variety of clothing, etc. All persons gladly made an offering of all the best things of their households. Lord Gaurāṅga-Sree Hari was pleased to accept their offerings, bestowing His Merciful Glance on all. Having taken His leave of all persons Lord Sree Gaurāṅga set out for His Own Home. Many students from East Bengal followed the Lord to Nabadwip to study under Him there.

The Lord apparently did not think it to be incompatible with the duty of a house-holder to accept the presents of the people of East Bengal for imparting them knowledge of the *Shāstras*. This may be objected to on the ground that it amounts to nothing less than the selling of knowledge which is forbidden by the *Shāstras*. There is a distinction between professional teachers of different branches of secular knowledge and the preacher of the Religion.

The profession of a secular teacher is recommended by the *Shāstras* as un-objectionable from the worldly point of view and is given preference over other occupations for earning a livelihood. The Lord does not appear in East Bengal as Preacher of the Religion. The *Shāstras* forbid selling of religious teaching. The preacher of religion must not accept any remuneration for his services as preacher. If he accepts payment and is dependent on it for his livelihood he cannot but desire to please his pay-masters and thus fail to maintain his unconditional adherence to the Truth, which is essential in every *bona fide* preacher of the religion. The least concession to any worldly purpose makes a person unfit for

being a preacher of the Absolute Truth. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to keep the whole arrangement for the preaching of Religion outside the obligations of the social systems devised for the attainment of purely worldly ends; as any adulteration is bound to be productive of irreparable mischief for all concerned. There is no harm in any one accepting presents in return for imparting knowledge of the *Shāstras* to his students. These payments also were voluntary and not confined to the students.

It was apparently regarded as the duty of all house-holders to place the best part of their wealth at the disposal of the secular teachers of the people. This was a social arrangement for the promotion of secular learning. It had nothing to do with the preaching of the religion. The people naturally flocked to Nīmāi Pandit in order to study Vyākaraṇa as He was reputed to be the greatest scholar of that day. They had their reward in gaining scholarship of a superior order in a short time.

There was, however, one notable exception. A most fortunate Brāhmaṇa, by name Tapan Misra, presented himself before the Lord on the eve of His return from East Bengal, with the intention of obtaining a solution of his doubts regarding the real nature of the Object and method of spiritual practices. Tapan Misra was not one of the ordinary type of enquirers who believe it to be their duty to be curious about everything and therefore also about religion. The problem, with which Tapan Misra approached the Lord, had been suggested in course of a long endeavour to find the Truth by the method of sincerely following out the injunctions of the *Shāstras*. Tapan Misra had already lost all taste for worldly life. He was in that critical state when the mode of life, with which he had been familiar, had ceased to interest, but when yet no satisfactory substitute had been found. Being naturally of a perfectly sincere turn of mind he had not sat down tightly on his doubts. He had been to all persons whom he considered likely to be able to help him in solving his doubts. These doubts were troubling him in spite of the conventional religious life with its theory and practices which, as the duty of one born in a Brāhmaṇa family, he had duly inherited and which he had been trying sincerely to follow up in life. He was too

genuinely inquisitive to be content without troubling about the real value of his inherited activities and their necessity for himself as an individual. He was, therefore, deeply pious in his external conduct but distracted within by the gravest doubts regarding his own real condition. This is a very rare combination. Habit is a formidable enemy on the path of progress if it happens to be unduly enamoured of itself and breeds the inclination to be really content with a bad thing. The human soul by his constitution is naturally opposed to anything short of the Absolute Truth. No mechanical dogmatism can satisfy him. The affairs of this world are carried on by most of us on the basis of working hypotheses called by the misleading designations of Natural Laws and Moral Principles. Their proper function is merely to stimulate, without being able to satisfy, our loyal inclination for the service of Truth. Those who suppose that it is never possible for us to attain the Real, Immutable Truth, soon get reconciled to this ever-shifting hypothetical mode of living which alone is possible with the help of empiric ethics and the other empiric sciences. They are not pessimists as regards their own method. They subsist on the hope of a hypothetical notion called progressive improvement, without really caring to examine seriously the basis of such hope.

Tapan Misra had ceased to be a contented empiricist. He had also failed to understand the basis of his own faith in the Scriptures. A careful study of the *Shāstras* and prolonged performance of *Shāstric* practices had failed to solve his doubts. He was studious, thoughtful and practical and had also been trying honestly to live the unworldly life enjoined by the *Shāstras*. As the result of this he had made the discovery that it was not possible to understand or obey the *Shāstras*, as their theories and injunctions seemed to contradict one another and certain principles also seemed wholly impossible to carry out in practice. He was too honest to be disposed to ignore or lightly explain away such discrepancies. In one word he was a seeker of the *Absolute Truth* and determined not to serve anything else under the name of the Truth.

In this dilemma Tapan Misra had a wonderful dream. A celestial being appeared to him in his dream and advised him to

proceed to Nimbāī Pandit Who would solve all his doubts. The god told him further that Nimbāī Pandit is no other than Nārāyaṇa Himself Who had appeared in this world in His Human Form for delivering the conditioned souls. The Brāhmaṇa was also warned not to divulge this secret of the Vedas to any one else as such conduct would entail trouble for him in all subsequent lives. The Brāhmaṇa shed copious tears on beholding this auspicious dream. Recovering his balance of judgment he blessed his good fortune and, fixing his thoughts on the Lord, hastened to His Presence.

Tapan Misra made his way to the place where the Lord was seated in the midst of His pupils, and, after making obeisance, stood before Him with the palms of his hands joined in the attitude of supplication. He then completely laid open his heart to the Lord, saying that the ordinary duties of life had lost all their charms for him, and that he was passing his days in a state of intense suspense, due to failure to understand the proper method and object of spiritual living. He had, therefore, come to Him for enlightenment on the subject, being fully convinced that there was no other way out of the difficulty except through His Mercy. He hoped to be delivered from the bondage of the world by His Kindness and prayed that He would overlook his unfitness and mercifully communicate to him the right method and object of spiritual living. He desired to learn the Truth from His Own Lips, and to be delivered thereby from the state of unbearable misery.

The Lord told the Brāhmaṇa that he was most fortunate, as there cannot be any fortune higher than the condition of one who is desirous of serving Krishna with all his faculties. The service of Godhead is a subject that is most difficult to understand and is vast beyond all measure. The Supreme Lord Himself settles the form of His worship for every Age, proclaiming the same for the information of all. For this purpose He comes down into this mundane world in each of the four Ages. He returns to his Realm after settling the form of the *Religion* that is appropriate for each particular Age. The account of the Lord's Appearances in this world is recorded in the *Shāstras* for the information of

every one. The Lord Krishna Himself says in the Geeta, 'I appear in this world in the successive Ages for the purpose of delivering the *sādhus*, for eliminating those who are addicted to evil and for fully establishing the Religion.' The *Bhagavatam* says that 'Krishna appears in each of the four Ages with a Different Complexion. He is White, Red and Yellow respectively in the three other Ages and is of a Dark Hue in Dwāpara. The Colour That Krishna assumes in the different Ages corresponds to the character of the particular Age. The form of Religion, laid down by the Lord for the Kali Age, is the congregational chant of the Holy Name. There are four different forms of the Religion to be followed by the souls in the different Ages. The object of all forms is the same. This common object is realised in the Krita Age by following the method of meditation (*dhyana*) on Vishnu; in the Tretā Age by worshipping Him with sacrifices (*makha*); in the Dvāpara Age by the mode of serving the Holy Form in the manner of ritualistic worship (*archana*) and in this Kali Age by chanting (*Kirtan*) Hari. The performance (*yajna*) of the chant of the Holy Name is, therefore, the only mode of the worship for the Kali Age. One cannot be delivered in the Iron Age by following any of the other prescribed forms of worship. The Vedas themselves fail to describe fully the praises due to one who takes the Holy Name night and day, eating or sleeping. It is necessary to note carefully that the modes of asceticism (*tapas*) and sacrifice (*yajna*) are *forbidden* in the Kali Age. Those, who worship Krishna, are most fortunate'. The Lord advised Tapan Misra to worship Krishna by staying at home, avoiding whatever was opposed to it positively or negatively, by the method of single-hearted devotion. Sree Gaursundar also assured Tapan Misra that he would realise the true nature of the object and mode of worship, and in fact everything, by means of the congregational chant of the Name of Hari. 'The Name of Hari alone is efficacious. There is absolutely no other course in the Kali Age'. The Lord told Misra that the Name, or *Mahāmantra*, That should be chanted consists of sixteen Names and thirty-two letters possessing the potency of the *mantra*, viz., "Harē Kṛṣṇa Harē Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Harē Harē Harē Rāma Harē Rāma Rāma Rāma Harē Harē."

He assured Misra that he would know the true object as well as method of spiritual living when by constant practice of chanting the Holy Name the first tender shoots of spiritual love (*prema*) would manifest themselves.

Misra made repeated prostrated obeisances at the Feet of the Lord on learning this Teaching from the Mouth of the Lord Himself. The Misra said that he would like to remain with the Lord, if so commanded. But the Lord asked him to proceed to Vārānasi (Benares) without delay, promising to meet him there and to tell him all the principles regarding method and object of spiritual living.

This short Catechism, of the Creed laid down by the Supreme Lord as the only form of Religion of the present Age, will give the reader a concrete and definite but not the detailed idea of the form of worship established by Sree Chaitanya Deva. The principles as well as the practice, that are taught, will become clearer as we follow the Career of the Lord and His devotees through each successive chapter. But it is necessary to make a few observations on the subject without anticipating what is to follow in order to clear up certain initial misconceptions that may trouble the reader in regard to the outline that is just offered.

It is definitely declared that the object of Religion is one but its form varies from Age to Age. But the form is not evolved by the course of events of this world. The establishment of the form of worship appropriate for the particular Age is also a Divine Event. This task is performed by the Supreme Lord Who comes down in this world for the purpose of establishing and proclaiming the form of the worship to be followed in each Age. This is a most important point. Those, who object to variety of the form of worship, are in the wrong. The variety of form is not evolved by the changing circumstances of this world, although it is of the nature of an adjustment. But the adjustment is not human, nor natural, but Divine, which is also made by the Lord Himself. By the side of this special form of worship established and proclaimed by the Lord Himself as the Dispensation of the Age there may and, as a matter of fact do, actually spring up quite a crop of the

historical forms devised by the blind speculative instinct of the human mind to find its own independent solution of the problem of the true function of life. The Divine Dispensation of each Age is fully in accordance with the teaching of the whole body of the *Shāstras* and is also definitely and clearly stated therein. This is the really authentic evidence of the Divine Dispensation for the present Age. This special form, though existing *potentially* in the record of the Scriptures, requires to be established and proclaimed by the Lord Himself to make it actually available for the Age.

The significance of neither the Form nor the object of Divine Dispensations may be properly grasped by the conditioned soul unless and until he is inclined of his own accord to *seek* for the Truth by the method of giving up every other mode and object of living when and to the extent the Truth actually manifests Himself. This is the *sine qua non*, the only pre-requisite, for the spontaneous attainment of spiritual enlightenment. The points that are to be carefully remembered, are these: 'Spiritual Truth is categorically and eternally different from *all* so-called empiric truth. Spiritual Truth is Eternal and Absolute by His Nature, whereas empiric truth is always tentative and changeable. The proper relation of the soul to Spiritual Truth is, therefore, that of unconditional, perfectly rational, submission; whereas the soul has *no* affinity whatsoever with the so-called empiric truth, which is a material product and towards which the human mind, mimicking the spiritual activity of the soul, pursues the plan of alternative adoption and rejection. It is the process which the mind is always disposed to proclaim as the function of the soul with *whom* it declares *itself* to be identical in order to delude the soul into agreeing to its unnatural domination. The mind is the agent of *Māyā* for deluding the soul. Spiritual Truth cannot be discovered by the efforts of the materialised mind. The clear perception of this fact is the indispensable pre-requisite for experiencing any real desire for the Spiritual Truth. To such a seeker, say the *Shāstras*, the Truth reveals His Own Form. The duty of the conditional soul is, therefore, to disavow all connection with empiric truth in theory *as well as in practice* and to wait upon the pleasure of the Spiritual Truth for all enlightenment. Spiritual Truth, unlike dead material hypotheses,

is a Living Entity possessing the power of the true initiative. Spiritual Truth is pleased to show Himself to the soul who, on realising the inevitable futility of the empiric method of quest, is in search of the right method and object of the true rational enquiry.'

But a person, who is dissatisfied with the limitations and inconclusiveness of the method and object of the empiric search for Truth, need not necessarily accept the alternative of waiting upon the Pleasure of the Divinity, Who is identical with the Absolute Truth, for enlightenment. He may still continue to depend on human contrivance. He may believe in magic, He may believe in blind faith (?) He may believe in asceticism or *yogic* practices based on the principle of the efficacy of control over the mind promised by physical processes such as breathing exercises, etc., etc. He may also believe in *direct* revelation to his heart without the necessity of any extraneous effort on his part. It is always possible to secure a number of texts of the *Shāstras* in apparent support of almost any view that one *has already decided to adopt*. The dissatisfaction, that leads to such futile activities, will be of *no help* in the quest of the Truth.

The instrumentality of the mind and its speculative faculty need not, of course, be ignored. All, that is necessary, is to continue to use them vigorously, but with all due allowance for their limitations, in every endeavour for the attainment of the unalloyed service of the Truth. When the Absolute Truth makes His Appearance to the human soul the cognitive faculty has to be actively employed in His service if the Truth is to be realised. But our cognitive faculty must not be allowed to obstruct or to dominate the Absolute Truth. Our cognitive faculty must submit to be enlightened, not passively after the manner of stocks and stones, but by the full exercise of its active receptive function which is natural and possible for all self-conscious entities. The defect of the empiric method consists in over-estimating the scope and power of the self-conscious (?) principle in the conditioned soul. The self-conscious principle itself *should* not project itself on the material world by wilfully disconnecting itself from the Source of *all real self-consciousness*. Such *wrong* relationship with matter is punished by the increasing curtailment of the

scope of activity of the conscious principle itself. Relationship of the soul with matter is possible and desirable but without losing connection with the very Source of self-consciousness. The purpose of spiritual endeavour is to revive in an active form the dormant connection with the Source. But the mind is to be directed to the Source of its consciousness by the active exercise of all its faculties for the purpose.

The existence of a *recognisable and accessible* Source of the pure, unobscured conscious principle is the initial necessity if any theory of the Absolute has to be translated into practice. This is supplied by the periodic Appearance of the Supreme Lord in this world. The *Shāstras* are His harbingers. The idea, that Religion is identical with dogma in the empiric sense, is due to fundamental misconception of the nature of the function of the soul in his purely spiritual state. Submission to a half-conviction or un-conviction is dogma in the real sense which is the very life of our ordinary wordly activity in all its forms. The almost unctuous fear of all dogma, that is so much affected by all empiricists, should appear to all consistent thinkers to be a piece of brazen hypocrisy. It is like the inveterate and designing thief warning honest people against the crime of theft in order to disarm all suspicions regarding the real thief who is no other than himself. The *Shāstras* alone are not dogmatic, but are wholly opposed to and free from all taint of irrational empiric dogmas open and disguised. The *Shāstras*, indeed, expose the futility and inconsistency of dogmatism to the chagrin of all hypocritical empiric professors and disseminators of rank dogmatism under the name of rationality. This is the destructive function of the *Shāstras*. Their constructive function is to supply the clue to the Absolute Truth.

But the *Shāstras* are not themselves sufficient for the purpose of effecting the deliverance of conditioned souls, as the latter are on principle disinclined to give them an unprejudiced, complete and patient hearing. The few, who are exceptions to this rule, are bound to attain the Truth if after carefully studying the *Shāstras* they do not misunderstand, or imperfectly understand, or fail to act up to, the method laid down in the *Shāstras*, in a

perfectly convincing and cognisable manner, for the quest of the Absolute Truth.

Tapan Misra could understand neither the method nor the object of spiritual endeavour as laid down in the *Shāstras*. He had been confused by his own *honest* endeavour. The methods that he had followed had actually failed, and he was also aware of this fact, to yield the result promised by the *Shāstras*.

It is, no doubt, impossible to fully understand how the instructions of Nimbāī Pandit recorded above could produce in such a critically minded, sincere soul complete and instantaneous faith in all the Statements of the Lord. The dogmatic empiricists will object to this on the ground that *it is dogmatism* to which he professes to be opposed *in theory*. But without further wasting our time on these shameless hypocrites, whose folly has already been sufficiently exposed, it would be far better to try to understand how Nimbāī Pandit Himself was free from all such hypocritical dogmatism.

What Nimbāī Pandit said is this: "Tapan Misra should constantly repeat the *mahāmantra*. The *mahāmantra* consists of sixteen Names and thirty-two letters of the Alphabet. The *mahāmantra*, although it is technically in the form of Name and not of *mantra*, yet possesses all the potency of the *mantra*. The Names in the case of address in their Sanskrit form, constituting the *mahāmantra*, have the following order: '*Harē Kṛṣṇa, Harē Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Harē Harē; Harē Rāma, Harē Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Harē Harē.*' This *mahāmantra* is to be constantly recited. There is no condition. The real meaning of the method and object of spiritual endeavour, laid down in the *Shāstras*, would appear spontaneously after the process had been followed to the point when the first tender shoots of spiritual love for the Divinity made their appearance."

This is a very simple creed which also does not apparently rest on the rational basis. A string of Names is to be uttered continuously. How could this apparently non-rational advice fully satisfy Tapan Misra?

The whole answer in a nutshell is this. It is so because Tapan Misra submitted to receive the Truth from the supreme Lord. The

Substantive Truth is communicated by the Power of Mercy of the Lord. He cannot be reached by the uphill effort of the empiric mind. It is no doubt true that Sree Chaitanyadeva subsequently described to this same Tapan Misra in greater detail this very subject. That Discourse is all-important and will appear in this work in its proper place. It will suffice for the present to observe that the process recommended is different from the magical art. The result promised is the knowledge of the right method and object of spiritual endeavour discussed in the pages of the vast literature of the *Shāstras*. Magic produces, and promises to produce, a temporary delusion. Even when magic seems to produce a comparatively lasting result it is also not spiritual in the rational sense of the philosophers. The cure of a disease of the seeming increase of the scope or power of the senses and the mind, in regard to their relation with the objects of this phenomenal world limited by the conditions of time and space, are not spiritual results according to any school. Those who are inattentive to the distinction between the Real Truth and changing hypotheses, between the spiritual and the material, are likely to confound the *mahāmantra* with a magical formula. It is necessary to avoid this possible misconception.

All that can be reasonably urged at this stage is that the proposition is stated but is not supported by any form of argument or elucidation. The answer is that the discussion is deliberately postponed to enable the Narrative to develop to that point at which it will be practicable to resume the further consideration of the subject in this form. Meanwhile the conversation of Nimāi Pandit with Tapan Misra and its effect on the latter may be accepted as a most wonderful event which actually took place but which does not explain itself.

Of course nothing is impossible with the Lord. The empiric dogmatist is not, however, satisfied, or profess to be dissatisfied, unless an effort is made to consider all subjects from the point of view of our limited reason which is confessedly unfit to find out the Real Truth. Such inconclusive discussions by the method of begging the question to be proved, also pretend to carry our

knowledge of the subjects so discussed further in the direction of the Truth. Such discussions undoubtedly serve to direct our attention to all the superficial and misleading aspects of a subject. We gather much information by its means, which is of a negative character and falls within the limited scope permitted to our present mental faculties. Such knowledge is applicable to our circumstances of the phenomenal world and enables us to a more or less extent to obtain the fulfilment of our worldly purposes. This is the principle of worldly utility. It need neither be belittled nor ignored. It is effective in its way. But the attainment of a worldly result is no help in the process of understanding the Absolute *i.e.*, the spiritual or real and abiding nature of those very phenomena. For that purpose they require to be looked at from the point of view of the Absolute Truth. The Lord alone can communicate the spiritual understanding which enables us to know the Absolute Truth. Once we have been enabled to attain the absolute standpoint we are in a position to really share in the discourse about the Absolute Truth which is the subject-matter of the *Shāstras*. The Lord may adopt any method to communicate to us this spiritual enlightenment. There is nothing surprising in regard to the Activities of the Lord. But at the same time the Lord does nothing that is not also perfectly rational in the only true sense. We are, therefore, justified in trying to find out not the empiric but the absolute *rationale* of the Lord's Teachings. We shall revert to this subject in its proper place.

Tapan Misra was, however, convinced that he had at last found out the Truth of Whom he was in search. He made repeated prostrated obeisances to the Lord Who now directed him to proceed to Benares without delay where the Lord promised to meet him again and impart the knowledge regarding the detailed principles of the method and Object of worship. The reader is now in a position to distinguish between the connected processes of the exposition of the principles of spiritual endeavour and imparting of spiritual enlightenment. Misra was not advised to repeat the *mahāmantra* mechanically. Such a piece of advice *gratis* could not have satisfied a real enquirer like Tapan Misra. He was satisfied because he was enlightened by the Grace of the Lord as

regards the substantive existence of the subjects of his enquiry. Such causeless occurrences ordinarily go by the names of miracle and magic. But we should be careful to remember that the Performances of the Lord are not miraculous in the sense of being unintelligible nor magical in the sense of being delusive. They are spiritual that is intelligible to the perfect judgment of the enlightened soul although wholly incomprehensible to the limited reason of the soul with a predilection for the bound state. There is, of course, no question of delusion.

Tapan Misra was spiritually enlightened by the Grace of the Lord; or, in other words, the perfect judgment of the emancipated soul was re-established in him. He was, therefore, in the position to understand the Reality of the Teaching of the Lord. The emancipated soul functions in a strictly subordinate capacity. Such a soul does not try to know anything by his own ascending effort. He simply waits to be enlightened. This may appear to be like total loss of initiative. But it is really the attainment of the true initiative. The enlightened soul is able to distinguish between the results obtainable by the process of the so-called initiative possible for the intellect that seeks its own gratification and the corresponding faculty of the free soul willingly seeking the Gratification of Kṛṣṇa. The initiative exists in both cases. But the power is abused in one case and used properly in the other. It is necessary to lead a healthy life. It is also necessary to understand the principles of the Medical Science for the purpose of being enabled to preserve one's health. It is meaningless to want to understand the principles for any other purpose. It is the only function of the free soul to serve the Truth. But the Absolute Truth is not a general formula, still less an abstraction. The Absolute Truth is a Real Person with Perfect Initiative and Perfect Will. The so-called abstract truth, being a figment of our defective imagination, is really a dead thing which cannot be our master. The Absolute Truth, because He happens to be the Real Person with Will of His Own Who is not identical with our wills, can really command and be really obeyed. The only function of the pure soul is to obey the Highest Person. It is possible to suppose that we realise the nature of the spiritual service when it is

presented to us in the form of an abstract discussion like the present one. But the conditioned soul can never realise the nature of spiritual service merely by the process of such discussion, because he has as yet no substantive experience of the spiritual existence. The Truth cannot be experienced by the material senses or the materialised mind. He can only be experienced by the spiritual senses and the spiritual mind. Tapan Misra found his spiritual senses and his spiritual mind by the Grace of the Lord. This settled his doubts regarding the substantive existence, nature, and object of spiritual endeavour. He was, therefore, no longer in need of the *knowledge* of the principles of such endeavour. But a discussion of the principles from the Lips of the Lord Himself was necessary for the *negative* enlightenment of unemancipated souls.

The Lord then embraced Tapan Misra. This produced horripilation all over the frame of the Brahmana due to the manifestation of spiritual ecstatic love that binds all individual (*Jiva*) souls with the Feet of the Lord. The Brahmana, on receiving the favour of the Embrace of the Lord of Vaikuntha, then experienced for the first time the real spiritual bliss. At the time of taking his leave he unbosomed to the Lord the details of his dream. On hearing his story the Lord observed that 'it was true as far as it was proper and reasonable; but he must not tell all this to any other person.' The Lord repeated this warning once more with earnestness. He then stood up smiling on the arrival of the auspicious moment of His Departure for Home. In this manner Lord Gauranga Sree-Hari prepared to return Home after glorifying the country of Vanga by His Presence on her soil. The Lord reached Home in the evening with a great quantity of valuables in the shape of money and costly objects which He had brought as presents from East Bengal.

The Lord made prostrated obeisances to the feet of His mother and made over to her all the treasures that He had brought and immediately proceeded with His disciples to the Ganges to bathe in the holy stream. The mother, stricken at heart, without delay busied herself in preparations for cooking His meal with the help of other members of the family. The Lord, Teacher of

all persons by His Own Example, prostrated Himself in obeisance to the Ganges in many ways. He sported in the water of the Ganges for a while. The Lord returned Home after having obtained the sight of the Ganges and bathed in her water. Then, after duly performing the daily worship, Lord Gauranga Sree-Hari sat down to His meal. The Lord of Vaikuntha, having dined to satisfaction, seated Himself at the doorstep of Vishnu's Shrine.

By this time all relatives and friends came to accost Him and sat on all sides round the Lord. The Lord, talking to all in a smiling and jocular manner, told them how pleasantly He had passed His days in East Bengal. Mimicking the mode of speech of East Bengal the Lord laughingly caricatured the people of that country. His friends did not say anything about the disappearance of Sree Lakshmi Devi, being aware that such communication would produce sadness. After a short stay all the friends took their leave of Him. The Lord sat in the same position continuing to chew the betel, indulging in light talk, laughter and jokes.

Sree Sachi Devi was staying away inside the room. She did not come before her Son. The Lord Himself now went up to His mother and found that her countenance was overcast with an expression of deep dejection. The Lord greeted His mother with sweet words. He enquired about the cause of her grief complaining that on His return from a distant land instead of welcoming Him with special gladness she had chosen to wear the appearance of mourning and pressed to know the reason of her sadness. On hearing these words of her Son the mother burst into tears holding down her face and remained speechless in her distress. The Lord told her that He understood everything. Some evil must have befallen her Daughter-in-law. At this all who were present informed the Lord that His Spouse had, indeed, obtained the mercy of the holy Ganges.

Lord Gauranga Sree-Hari on being told of the Departure of Sree Lakshmi Devi, His Consort, paused for a brief space holding down His Head. As a confession of grief at separation from His Beloved, the Life of all the Vedas remained silent for a while.

After indulging His Grief in this manner for a brief space, in imitation of the ways of the people of this world, the Lord repeated with a patient mind this sloka of the *Bhagavatam*, 'Who are, indeed, these husbands, sons, and relatives? Whose relations are they? It is all due to ignorant delusion.'

The Lord continued to speak, 'Mother, why do you feel sad? How can that which is pre-ordained be cancelled? Such is the march of Time. No one belongs to anybody. It is for this reason that the Vedas declare this world to be impermanent. The whole world is under the Dominion of the Lord. Who else can bring about either union or severance? Therefore what has happened has been by the Will of the Lord. Where is the use of grieving for what is past? Is there any one who is more fortunate than that departed person of pious deeds who has attained the mercy of the Ganges before the Disappearance of Her Husband? Consoling His mother in this way the Lord turned His Mind to His other duties in the company of his friends and relatives. On hearing these Words of nectarine sweetness from the Holy Lips of the Lord all persons were fully relieved of every cause of grief.

We are accustomed to expect something altogether new and strange and wholly different from everything with which we are now so familiar, on being spiritually enlightened. This accounts for our contempt for the homely and familiar events of our present everyday life. We expect to find the life of saints to be something miraculous and abnormal. This is due to want of clear thinking that leads us to confound the super-natural with the unnatural. We have not to travel through all the vastness of space in order to arrive at Vaikuntha. We fall into this world as soon as our spiritual vision is obscured. The same Vaikuntha is then reflected in a most unwholesome manner in the mirrors of our hearts. All that is necessary in order to get rid of the misery of the worldly bondage, is to cleanse the mirror of the heart to enable Vaikuntha to appear to us in the undistorted form. This function few of us consider it worth our while to set about in right earnest. We want to reach Vaikuntha by extending the

scope of our wrong activities. But so long as the heart remains unchanged the prospect does not undergo any material change. The whole question is this—'Are we seriously desirous of knowing the Truth? Are we prepared for a change of heart to accomplish this?'

This is hastily supposed to imply the call for the abdication of all functions of this world. If wife and children have not to be 'loved' (?) we are naturally shocked by the requisition. It would be easier to part from them for good which is happening to soldiers and sailors any day of their lives. But that does not make them spiritual, as we know from experience. It is the humdrum duties of the average householder which hang round our necks like the proverbial mill-stone and require to be 'enlivened' by the relieving process of separation, heroism, death, calamities or the like. Without these latter life would be unbearable. The question on the threshold of the spiritual life is not how to retain, or get rid of, the activities that we already have, in a more effective or striking manner. Such an attitude involves a forgone conclusion. How can a temporary thing be retained *effectively*? How can an *actual* thing be got rid of without mangling ourselves? The runaway as well as the preservative methods are alike futile and irrational. But they happen to be the only ones that the resources of our present imagination can suggest for our relief. No third alternative is at present conceivable to us.

That a person, who is acting exactly like ourselves in this very world and with whom we ourselves have most intimate relations, should have to be considered as being altogether different in his outlook and behaviour from ourselves, is difficult to understand or to admit. All that we may be prepared to allow is that he is different from us in the same way as any two persons are different from one another. The esoteric explanation is not of much use either in understanding or in dealing with any person 'who is also apparently found to belong to this world in the ordinary sense. If a person calling himself or allowing himself to be called a *Vaishnava* have to be allotted a privileged position, that does not accord with the requirements of our common sense, simply on the basis of such esoteric explanations, there would presently be

no necessity for the exercise of common sense at all in any affair of life.

These are the two poles of the empiric attitude. It expects either magic or wholesale surrender to the so-called common sense. It professes the latter, as being the more workable of the two. What change, if any, it accordingly asks, is proposed to be effected in its attitude by the transcendentalists?

Sree Gaursundar goes to East Bengal to earn wealth by teaching the people. This is quite intelligible and natural from the common sense point of view. After His return from there He finds that His wife had had a sudden and untimely end. But He is not upset by the information and calmly consoles His stricken mother. This is also quite sensible and nothing extraordinary. It is ordinarily done under similar circumstances by many other persons whose doings are allowed to pass unnoticed, by the ordinary rules of common sense. If there be an esoteric meaning behind all this, which was denied by many of His contemporaries at the time of their occurrence, what difference will it make in our conduct if we refuse to take any notice of the same? We would behave in the same, or sometimes may be in a better way in similar circumstance by the guidance of our common sense without troubling about any supposed spiritual implication.

Life in Vaikuntha resembles life in this world, but it does not interest the people of this world. In Vaikuntha there are far more attractive objects of enjoyment than we find in this world and in an absolutely and fully accessible form; but no one there enjoys or discards them. This is opposed to the so-called common sense of the people of this world. The common sense of this world tells us both to enjoy and to discard. The common sense of Vaikuntha tells one to do neither. The Vaishnavas are endowed with the common sense of Vaikuntha. The esoteric explanation is the only real explanation of their conduct which is based on a different common sense, in the same way as the exoteric explanation is the only explanation that is ordinarily given of the conduct of the people of this world.

If it is asked, 'Do the Vaishnavas want to be guided by the common sense of Vaikuntha, which is claimed to be different from the common sense of this world, in their dealings with the people of this world?' The reply is both 'yes' and 'no'. They behave towards one another unambiguously and in accordance with the common sense of Vaikuntha. Towards the people of this world they behave in accordance with the common sense of this world which is, however, perfectly amenable to the common sense of Vaikuntha. So there need not be any quarrel over the matter on the part of the advocates of common sense in its worldly sense.

The only difficulty is that ordinary common sense, being based on the malicious selfish desire for sensuous well-being of one-self, leaves all our problem of existence really unsolved; nay, it actually aggravates the evil of a perpetual state of joyless discord. Our common sense is sound in essence but misguided in practice by the fell disease of hankering for selfish transitory enjoyment. The little acts of everyday life would be endowed with the perfection of Vaikuntha if only a real change of attitude could be brought about. This is wholly beyond the powers of our mind to conceive, and it is not possible for us to fill in every detail of the scheme of life led in Vaikuntha by means of our poor, corrupt imagination.

Every activity of Vaikuntha is productive of more really lasting good and happiness than all the hollow mummeries of the whole range of activities of this accursed world. Sree Gaur-sundar apparently led a most ordinary kind of life as householder. Later He led the ordinary life of a *sannyasin*. But Both were actually lived on the plane of Vaikuntha. The Narrative of His Life and its apparently ordinary common-place Events acquaint us with the Archetype of the actual life led by absolutely pure souls in the Realm of Vaikuntha. The esoteric meaning is the real meaning of such a life. The esoteric meaning of the worldly life is a contradiction in terms. But all entities of this world are capable of being used properly if they are employed in the service of the Absolute Truth. In order to attain that point of view we must try to act up to the common sense of Vaikuntha.

If we choose to lead a worldly life we can never obtain a glimpse of that transcendental subject. It is not by 'digesting' or 'lecturing' on the Vedānta Philosophy that spiritual enlightenment is attainable. There are unfortunately many clever exponents of the Vedānta in this country and abroad who have done no appreciable good either to themselves or to others by their vanities. The Life and Teachings of Sree Gaursundar are worth most careful perusal because They raise at every step the gravest issues discussed in the Vedānta, in their concrete, living form. All exposition of the Vedānta has to conform to the Life of Sree Chaitanya before it can be accepted as really True. This is the relation between the two. In this case we have to do with the Actual Reality, while in the case of ordinary worldly Pandits we have to deal with the laboured non-sense of corrupt humbugs who really know nothing of their subject. The mere mechanical perusal of the Genuine Account of the Life of Sree Chaitanya is productive of incalculable good, in as much as it presents to us in a concrete and uncontroversial form the problem of spiritual living. After we have read the Life of Sree Chaitanya we understand that it is possible for a devotee to lead the life of Vai-kunṭha before our very eyes without our being aware of the same; and, what is more to the point, that it is possible for us also to lead such a life in this world without really disturbing anybody.

Sree Gaursundar exhibited the *Leclā* of being smitten with grief on receiving the first intimation of the Departure of His Consort from this world. Sree Sachi Devi was apparently very much grieved by the loss of her Daughter-in-law. Grief at the sad demise of beloved ones is natural and inevitable in the case of the people of this world. There is also grief in Vaikunṭha but there it is a particularly delicious variety of uninterrupted happiness. The reason of this we gather from the Words of Sree Gaursundar addressed to His mother to console her. All grief is due to forgetfulness of the fact that no one is either parent, child, wife or husband, of any other person. Therefore, there can really be no such thing as bereavement which is experienced by reason of our ignorance of the Truth.

But are we, therefore, justified in neglecting our ordinary duties towards our dear and near relatives? This way of stating the question is misleading. People of this world are exposed to joys and griefs on account of their friends and relatives. These joys and griefs are of a transitory and unwholesome nature. Their transitoriness as well as unwholesomeness are due to a fundamental misconception of the events which are their cause. After the misconception is removed we may or may not continue to have any dealings with our relatives and friends *as such*. The devotee makes no distinction between these two states. He may or may not continue his intimate relationship with friends and relatives. He is guided by the resolve of doing nothing except the Bidding of Sree Krishna. If by the Will of Krishna he lives as a householder he is careful to discharge his ordinary duties towards the members of his family but without confounding the transitory with the eternal. The transitory cannot be ignored. But it need not, therefore, be regarded as identical with the permanent Verity. On the contrary the transitory is capable of being turned to the account of the permanent interest of a person if he makes the former strictly subordinate and conformable to the requirements of the latter. This will not necessarily make much appreciable outward difference in the conduct of such a person towards anybody, except occasionally under the necessity of being loyal to the spiritual standpoint. But his object and outlook will be nevertheless necessarily altogether different from theirs and it would be convenient to preserve an attitude of unsuspected reserve about the real reason of difference, especially when no useful purpose is likely to be served by its disclosure to unappreciative people. This is no culpable duplicity as it implies preference for Truth as against untruth and a more effective desire to serve Him. It is no doubt possible to live a straight-forward and professed spiritual life even in this world. But this may not always be effective in inducing worldly people to follow the Truth. It is one of the most strange things about spiritual life that one who leads such a life can do good to all by finding a way to associate everybody with himself in his spiritual activities. The form of this connection will not be the same

in all cases not because the tastes and capacities of people vary but because Krishna is Autocrat. It is not to serve worldly people that a devotee willingly lays himself under the obligation imposed by the Truth, of humouring their weaknesses in order to exploit those very weaknesses for the service of the Truth. Those who are not in the secret are likely to find fault with such apparent lapses from the ideal (?) of straightforward worldly conduct. Such lapses should also by no means be imitated by any body. But they constitute the service of the Lord possible in this world.

Sree Gaurasundar and Sree Sachi Devi were, however, acting truly in grieving at the Departure of Sree Lakshmi Devi. They did not grieve like worldly people. The devotees of the Lord are most intimately tied to one another by reason of their association in the common service of the Lord. There is no question of the physical body or the materialised mind in such relationship, nor any desire for sensuous gratification of themselves. But Sree Krishna can be served by and through all forms of relationship and distinctive manifestations which only serve to increase the charm and diversity of spiritual service. The only thing needful is to avoid self forgetfulness and not to suppose oneself to be any other than the exclusive servant of Krishna.

CHAPTER XV.

MARRIAGE WITH SREE VISHNUPRIYĀ DEVI.

THE LORD continued to indulge in the sweet taste of learning and thereby prevented any one from understanding His Real Nature. He bathed early in the morning in the Ganges and, after performing His morning worship, made His way to the house of Mukunda Sanjaya, the father of Purushottamdās.

After the Lord had taken His Seat in the Chandimandap of Mukunda Sanjaya His students would turn up one by one. If any of them by chance appeared without the *tilaka* mark on his forehead on any day the Lord sent him back home observing 'that the forehead of a Brāhmaṇa without the *tilaka* resembles the charnel ground being proof that he has not performed his worship of that day.' Thus the Lord took care that all His students strictly followed the injunctions of the *Shāstras* in all particulars.

The making of the *tilaka* mark on twelve different limbs of the body is prescribed by the *Shāstras* as the indispensable duty of every Brāhmaṇa. The *tilaka* is made with the earth of holy ground sanctified by its association with the Lord or His devotees. It is to be made in the form of a line pointing upwards with an aperture running from the base to the top to represent the Temple of the Lord. The horizontal *tilaka*, which is technically called *tripundra*, is forbidden to Brāhmaṇas who are candidates for the study of the Veda. The *tripundra* is deprecated as being the mark of a non-Brāhmaṇa. The *tripundra* is worn by those who claim to be themselves Nārāyaṇa. The *urdhapundra* or the upward *tilaka* is worn by those who regard themselves as the servants of Vishnu. No one who is not a Vaishnava can be a true Brāhmaṇa. Access to the Veda is closed to a person who does not recognise the superiority of the servants of Vishnu. The non-Brāhmaṇas do not admit the eternal superiority of the spiritual pre-

ceptor. They are *sudras*. They paint on their forehead the *tripundra* sign symbolising their identity with God-head. This is the most deadly of sins and accordingly it is laid down that if one meets by chance a Brāhmaṇa (?) wearing the *tripundra* mark, he must forthwith bathe with all his clothes on, in order to be purged of the pollution caused by the unholy sight.

There is really no worship for one who refuses on principle to recognise the eternal superiority of the Lord. Those who do not worship the Lord are *sudras*. On the other hand it is the bounden duty of every Brāhmaṇa, who is a servant of the Lord, to worship Him daily. Unless this is strictly complied with no one must be admitted to the status of a student of the Vedas. Those, who demur to the stringency of such regulations on the pleas of liberalism and toleration, suppose that education freely imparted will produce a change of heart even of those who behave improperly through sheer perversity. It is also assumed that secular knowledge, which is capable of being irregularly acquired, is necessarily better than secular ignorance. Nimāi Pandit was the Teacher of *Vyākaraṇa* which forms the primary course of study that has to be gone through by every student of secular learning. Nimāi Pandit did not admit into His Grammar-class any one who had not performed his daily worship of Vishnu and had not painted his forehead with the mark of the upward *tilaka*.

Should this be regarded as intolerant? It is no doubt a proposal to ban all education not based on the true religion professed by a Brāhmaṇa. Nimāi Pandit did not say that non-Brāhmaṇanas were to be banished or suppressed forcibly. Atheism has always flourished in this world and is the creed more or less of the vast majority, nay strictly speaking, of almost all persons, of this world. It is the paramount duty of every God-fearing man to try his best to help in reducing this appalling volume of atheism. Secular education happens to be such by reason of its total dissociation from religion. It is the outcome of the open atheistic attitude. The pseudo-Vaishnavas are masked atheists and are also advocates and apologists of spurious liberalism, compromise and willing toleration of all forms of unspiritual conduct. The highest devotees are tolerant for a different reason. To the devotee the Truth

is the only Object of worship and he does not recognise any value of any method separated from the Object. According to current empiric Ethics the method and the object must be severally moral. In other words the method of the empiric thinker is not identical with the object. Grave harm is apprehended by empiricists if this vital and salutary difference between method and object, insisted upon by empiric morality, is ignored. This is one of the elementary principles of empiric ethics and need not be laboured. This separation between method and object does *not* exist in spiritual conduct. For example toleration is considered by empiric ethics as a good principle by itself. At any rate they expect that every consideration should be given to it in coming to any decision in regard to really ethical conduct. If it is necessary to be intolerant under any circumstances, and such contingency is by no means impossible nor rare in practice, the necessity itself is regarded by empiric ethics as an evil which is unavoidable in the present imperfect conditions of this world. Empiric morality is thus perpetually reduced to the form of unprincipled compromise between the principles of hypocritical good and necessary evil, which is regarded as undesirable in theory but unavoidable in practice. Nay it even recommends as our duty to adopt any compromise, however objectionable, which may be necessitated by an impartial consideration of the specific circumstances of each case. But as there is no such necessity for compromise on the spiritual plane the difficulty does not exist and the method there is always identical with the object. The apparent intolerance displayed by Sree Gaur-sundar towards novices on the spiritual path is not a necessary evil, a departure under pressure of circumstances from the standard of the absolute good, but the perfect good itself.

It is necessary to consider this vital point a little more in detail. Why is empiric ethics under the necessity of viewing the method of an activity as separate from its object? Because it is not possible, circumstanced as we are at present, to understand the whole purpose of any person. A practical code of conduct, the formulation of which is the object of empiric ethics, therefore seeks to correct our unavoidably imperfect knowledge of the complete, the whole purpose of another by providing a confessedly

imperfect safeguard by attaching a presumptive value to the external features of an act, attempting to join method and object in a separable combination to obtain a rule of conduct which at best possesses only a negative value. In the case of the Absolute Truth the obstructive circumstances are altogether absent. Absolute knowledge is perfect knowledge. Conduct issuing from such knowledge has no separable external features that belong even to the so-called ethical conduct of this world. The conduct proceeding from perfect knowledge possesses the perfection of its source. This is not all. This perfection is unattainable on the material plane, whereas it is natural and inevitable on the spiritual plane. On the spiritual plane the object and method of conduct are alike spiritual. The objects, with which we have to deal on the spiritual plane, are themselves spiritual, that is to say, capable of communicating the knowledge of their real nature to us. This establishes that perfect unity between method and object which is denoted by the term identity, if we want to express it by the nearest material analogy.

It is only if we bear in mind this categorical difference between ethical and spiritual conduct that we would be enabled to avoid the blunder of judging spiritual conduct by the empiric ethical (?) standard. And it should also be possible for us to understand the perfect validity of the contention that conduct that is sanctioned by the spiritual test, is the only truly ethical conduct even as regards also its external appearance. In consequence of this rational conviction such pseudo-ethical fetishes as the so-called principles of toleration, chastity, truthfulness, etc., etc., professed to be worshipped by empiric ethics, cease to impress or frighten and can even be discarded without any chance of being overtaken by those dire immoral consequences which they are utterly unable to prevent or modify.

The question of the spiritual value of any external 'symbol' has been confidently decided by empiric thought against the claimant of such value on grounds which that science is equally at a loss to explain. This point has already been treated in another part of the present Narrative. It will suffice to say here that the regulation of the connection between the material world and the

spiritual, if it is to be at all properly performed, must be placed wholly under the jurisdiction of the latter. That the human body is the temple of the Lord may appear to be no more than a 'symbol' to the empiricist who really understands by 'symbol' as indicating what is not wholly non-existent. But if the empiricist really cares for his own logic he should call the wholly abstract as also the symbol of the non-existent and *vicc versa*. The spiritual is neither concrete nor abstract mundanity. It is quite different from the concrete and abstract of our mental speculation, both of which are perverted deluding reflections of the Substantive Truth. The abstract which the empiricist is pleased to *call* spiritual for reasons which he cannot explain, is really only the abstract of the relative and is situated at the furthest distance from the Absolute Reality. The spiritual is neither the concrete gross matter nor the abstract speculation about gross matter. This world, although it seems to have an existence of its own, has really no independent substantive existence. The impersonal or abstract worship, which the empiricist is so anxious to provide, is a figment of his perverted imagination and has no substantive existence even at its source. He is himself only a pseudo-symbolist and his condemnation of improper symbolisation applies really to himself. It is for the deliverance of such blundering pseudo-symbolists from the clutches of this fatal form of delusion that the process of worship enjoined by the *Shāstras* have been laid down by those who are themselves free from such delusion.

The *tilaka* mark is no doubt a symbol. But it is a symbol of the Reality to Whom we have no access at present except by means of the real symbol. This symbol is intended, and authorised, to arouse the consciousness of the Reality in those who are at present devoid of the same. Those who oppose the symbol on the ground that it does not correspond, like their own unreal symbols, to the perverted, deluding shadow of the Truth, are only worshippers of the changing symbol of untruth. The pseudo-symbolists have, indeed, no objection to decorate their gross physical bodies with all manner of symbols of this material world, conceived by them as being the only Reality, an assumption which effectively prevents all realisation of the very existence of the spiritual symbol.

It is rational to try to demolish this suicidal idolatry by substituting in the place of the worship of the symbols of this world the real symbol of the most fundamental fact of the world of the soul, viz., that Godhead in His True Form does not in-dwell the physical body or the materialised mind, but has His Eternal Abode in the pure consciousness of the immaculate soul who, in his natural position, is free from all connection with matter and who is our only real self.

Forgetfulness of our true self is perpetuated by any arrangement that is based upon confusion of the physical body and the materialised mind with the soul or self proper. The decorations naturally coveted by the physical body at the instance of the renegade mind entangles the soul in the meshes of worldly wants. The only decoration of the Temple of Godhead is Godhead Himself. But neither His Temple nor Godhead Himself, Who dwells therein, are symbols of shadows as the empiricists want us to believe, but the Reality Himself Who possesses the qualities of self-conscious, personal and eternal existence which is His perfectly consistent logical connotation.

Candidates for the knowledge of the Truth must be required to prove their *bona fide* before they are admitted into the Academy of the Truth. This is also imitated by the empiricists in admitting students to institutions of empiric knowledge. Secular learning, sedulously divorced from spiritual living, is responsible for all the miseries of this world. He is a bad physician who hopes to cure his patient by allowing the disease to be aggravated by deliberate and persistent mal-treatment. It is the duty of the wise physician to act on the less enterprising maxim that the readiness to prevent is always better than effecting a cure. The uncompromising intolerance of mal-treatment fully represents the principle of toleration by its regard for the Absolute Truth. Real toleration may be defined as extreme partiality for the Truth. Toleration and partiality are equally good when they are exercised on behalf of the Truth and are utterly condemnable and terribly mischievous when they are made to serve untruth.

The Lord evinced a very particular pleasure in tearing to pieces and exposing mercilessly the pedantic defects of everybody.

One of His favourite Pastimes consisted in caricaturing the language of the people of Sylhet and East Bengal. The infuriated Sylhetese retorted to the jokes of the Renegade Son of a Sylhetese by emphatically reminding the irascible Tormentor of His Own Lineage, telling Him that He Himself, both His parents, in fact every one of His family, belonged to Sylhet. 'What sense could there be', they demanded with a natural indignation, 'on the part of such a Person to get up a hypocritical condemnation of what also equally concerned Himself'. But the Lord was not to be denied His Pastimes by any manner of argument to the contrary and His jocular propensity only increased by every effort to convince Him of its mischievous and self-condemnatory nature. The Lord, indeed, carried the joke to most unseemly lengths, till at last the angry Sylhetese, losing all patience, grasped at the skirts of the cloth worn by the Lord and dragged Him many a day to the King's Court to have Him punished by the law. The friends of the Lord could extricate Him from the clutches of the law on such occasions only by the greatest exertions. The Lord was equally unreasonable towards East Bengal people. He would lie in wait for an opportunity, and take to His Heels after breaking the *Bāngāli's* begging bowl of dried gourd.

The Lord, even while He was following the responsible occupation of Teacher, displayed an irrepressible disposition for every kind of prank, with one and only one remarkable exception. He kept strictly aloof from all association with, or talk about, women. The Lord never looked at women, even by a side-glance. 'Whence', says Thākur Brindāvandas, 'all eminent persons avoid praising Lord Gaurāṅga by describing Him as Amorous Lover. Because although every kind of praise is applicable to the Lord yet the wise sing only what is appropriate in regard to the Distinctive Nature of the Subject of their praise.'

Against this clear warning, conveyed by Sree Brindāvandas Thākur, who is the only authority universally recognised by the followers of Sree Chaitanya in regard to the Activities of the Lord during the period of His Householder Life, there has nevertheless sprung up a definite school which calls itself the community of the Gaur-Nāgaris (*i.e.*, sweet-hearts of Gaur) on the ostensible

ground that Gaursundar is identical with Sree Krishna, and, therefore, the inner meaning of His Activities, according to this school, must also be the same as the obvious meaning of the Leelā of Sree Krishna. Such a view is opposed to the Facts of the Narrative described in this work, as also to the specific and explicit testimony of Thākur Brindāvandās regarding the practice of the most eminent devotees. The doctrine, therefore, seems to be a concoction of the brains of persons who allow their sensuous imaginations to carry them off their legs even in a matter which lies wholly beyond the reach of our material senses. To such temperaments the Activities of Sree Gaursundar, both as Householder and San்நyāsin, must ever remain utterly unintelligible. The only course, that is open to them for getting rid of their error, is to practise unconditional submission at the feet of the transcendental seers and to cherish absolute faith in the truth of their words. Our ribald imagination has no place in the Spiritual Sphere. The ordinary rules of empiric history strictly subordinate the function of imagination to reasoning based on dependable evidence. In forming the true idea of the Personality of Sree Chaitanya it will serve no useful purpose to ignore alike the method of empiric as well as that of spiritual history. The latter requires the imagination to be subordinated to Scriptural evidence recorded by the Āchāryyas. The Gaur-Nāgaris are opposed to the Āchāryyas. They are also opposed to the ordinary method of empiric history. For these reasons they deserve no hearing either from historians or from those persons who follow the true method laid down in the *Shāstras*. They may be appreciated only by those who want to turn sacred subjects into a means of their own sensuous gratification.

It should be enough to remark in this connection that as a Householder Sree Gaursundar exhibited the Leelā of leading the life of the ideal devotee, following the path of spiritual endeavour according to the rules laid down in the *Shāstras* and in accordance of their meaning as expounded by the Āchāryyas. In the latter half of His Career the Lord put before us the model of the life led by a devotee who has attained the condition of amorous devotion to the Absolute. In both cases His example makes it neces-

sary for us to give a wide berth to association with females as females in the direct or indirect manner.

If it be asked how one is required to conduct himself towards females the answer that is furnished by the Life of Sree Gaur-sundar is that carnality in thought and deed is to be wholly avoided. We have already had an occasion to discuss this very point in connection with the Marriage of Sree Lakshmi Devi with the Lord and in describing the relationship that existed between Her and Sree Gaursundar after the wedding.

We must guard ourselves against the error of begging the question by assuming as an axiomatic truth the opinion that the race requires to be preserved and propagated by cautious and systematic exercise of the sexual power. But this in itself need not be considered as necessary, or even as harmless when it is looked at from the absolute point of view. The race may cease to exist in spite of all our endeavour to preserve it. Where is the guarantee that the human race will endure for ever? If one protests against such discussion on the ground that it is profitless for man, such a person may be asked whether he is sure that he is eternally mortal. In discussing the absolute Truth it is necessary to avoid dogmatism prompted by the conditions under which we happen to live at present. Whenever any limit is set to any discussion by means of empiric dogmatism, it ceases to be applicable to the Absolute. Therefore, it is necessary not to pre-suppose the conclusion in a discussion of the Absolute.

The race may lose the re-productive power or the Earth itself may be destroyed by a cosmic disturbance. The Absolute Truth should stand in all circumstances. Sree Gaursundar shows the method by which the Absolute Truth can be attained. We may attain to Him if we patiently listen to the story of His Life from the lips of those who themselves realise His true meaning, *viz.*, from the Āchāryyas. There is no other way. The Gaur-Nāgaris follow their own unbridled imaginations and pretend to attain to the Absolute Truth by an intensive admiration for the mundane sexual activity and sexual thought. Such practice is wholly condemned by the Āchāryyas. The Āchāryyas refuse to accept the argument that the preservation of the human race is

the object of human life. They are thus in a position to consider the value of perfect abstention from carnality, without prejudice.

Birth, reproduction and death are the natural condition of all living things in this world. All other worldly functions are derivatives from these. The question before us is, whether it is our duty to perform these functions in the way that may appear to us to be most effective. This, as I have already pointed out, is really begging the question. We should rather ask, if we really want a solution of the problem, 'Why are we reduced to the necessity of undergoing birth, life and death at all'? Once this point has been cleared up we should be able to understand what we have to do.

The *Shāstras* say that we are not subject to birth, nor death, but possess eternal life. It is not necessary for us to try to prolong a state of existence which is not our real life. On the contrary our duty is to get rid of ignorance and to attain to our true life which according to the *Shāstras* is perfectly free from all ignorance and unwholesomeness. The eternal life is both real and attainable. It is not a figment of the deluding imagination. We should try to attain this eternal and perfect life by all means. It is also our duty to use our present perishable life for the attainment of the eternal life. The practice of mundane sexual act and sexual thought is the greatest obstacle in the way of our realisation of the Absolute Truth. This is the teaching of Sree Chaitanya exemplified by His Own Life. The subject will be positively considered in connection with the nature of spiritual amour in a subsequent chapter of this work.

Sexual act and sexual association in every form are definitely condemned. This *fact* should not be whittled down by explaining the word '*stri*' as meaning all forms of worldly enjoyment or worldliness as a whole. The context does not support this otherwise plausible explanation. Sexuality has been specifically condemned. The question whether perfect freedom from carnality is possible in the married state, is beside the point. The sexual inclination may also be present without actually practising the physical act. If the inclination itself is merely destroyed, it is tantamount to self-destruction. The real spiritual principle, corresponding to carnality, is

not condemned. The present unwholesome perversion of outlook is sought to be remedied. Sex in the worldly sense is not valued, but at the same time the existence of the principle in the spirit is admitted. What is asserted is that there should be no confusion between sex in the material sense and the corresponding spiritual principle. The one stands in the way of the realisation of the other. The complete elimination of mundane sexual act and thought is not the cause but the inevitable result of the attainment of the spiritual sex. The two can *never* co-exist. In the spiritual the whole outlook is radically changed. It is not, therefore, possible to understand the nature of the married state of a Vaishnava without taking into account the whole position. It should be enough for our present purpose to state that the Vaishnava loves his wife or husband not as husband or wife but as the spiritual associate of his soul, which precludes the idea of the mundane sex. It is not Platonic love, which is a figment of the imagination and has no substantive existence except by reference to mundane sex. The love, that joins together pure *jīva* souls, is not and cannot be carnality. Spiritual amour, in the case of the highest souls, is capable of being reciprocated only by Krishna Chandra Himself. The love that forms the bond of union between only the highest souls, is of the nature of affection that is experienced towards one another by the friendly *confidantes* of the Gracious Mistress of the One Amorous Hero. It is the Mistress's delight which is absolutely and naturally preferred to one's own and for the promotion of which one's own spiritual inclination for amorous association with Krishna is wholly discarded not in the spirit of sacrifice but in the spirit of positive and real exercise of the highest natural instinct. All this falls flat on those who retain any trace of the taste for mundane sexuality. The purpose of the institution of marriage is fulfilled by the complete elimination of sexuality following on the associated pursuit of this spiritual end by the married couple. They must have no *ideal* of carnal connection as husband and wife. When this state has been realised the marriage tie ceases automatically to have any sexual import. The Vaishnava has no husband or wife except Sree Sree Rādhā-Krishna. This is the necessary disappearance

of the apparent on the appearance of the true self and the complete fulfilment of the spiritual instinct reflected in a perverted form in the principle of sex.

The doubt, regarding the questionable kind of society that will result from the carrying out of the idea, troubles us only so long as we continue to confound the soul with the physical body. The soul is neither born nor does he die. When the soul realises his own nature, his prospects are at once and radically changed. He begins to function on a different plane. The selfish and unwholesome ambition, that necessitated his incarceration in the house of correction of this world, naturally disappears on the attainment of other and purer ambitions and a larger vision. Those things which appear to be vital in this world, e.g., the preservation of the species by the exertion of the reproductive power, etc., etc., are rendered unnecessary in the realm of the spirit, which is the real home of the eternal souls that are unborn and imperishable.

The Lord continued to teach His pupils in the Chandi-Mandap of Mukunda Sanjaya. He sat there in the midst of His pupils expounding the *Shāstras*, while medicinal oil, named after Vishnu, was applied to His Head by some favoured person, to afford relief to the nervous malady which it was His Pastime to manifest. He explained the texts in endless ways. The Lord taught His pupils from early morning till mid-day when He repaired to the Ganges to bathe. He was engaged till midnight everyday in teaching and helping His students to prepare their lessons. All those, who studied at the Feet of the Lord, became Pandits in course of the year by attaining the knowledge of the principles of the *Shāstras*. This was the daily Life of Sree Chaitanyadeva as Professor. The Lord relished nothing except the sweet taste of learning.

The view, that Sree Chaitanya was never in a perfectly sound state of mind, has been put forward by a few persons out of Sheer malice and ignorance. The motive of such unfortunate people is to find, or even invent, a reason for proving their ignorance. If the brain of an insane Person be capable of supplying the clue to the Knowledge of the Reality to the sane ignorant persons of this world the latter need not neglect to be benefited thereby.

Worldly people are never considered to be out of their proper senses by the Allopaths, Homeopaths, Hakims and Vaidyas of this world, who pride themselves on the infallibility of their power of diagnosing all kinds of mental and physical ailments. But if all worldly people are proved to be irrational and deluded should the Medical Sciences condescend to take serious notice of such aberration? Disease is one of the ordinary devices of the Deluding Power of Sree Chaitanya intended by His Mercy to shake the confidence of worldly people in the certainty and value of the pleasures derivable from the hallucinative workings of the medically sound(?) mind and body. A medically sound mind in a medically sound body is the *summum bonum* of the Medical Sciences. Is it altogether impossible for a sound mind in a sound body, which can pass the medical test, to be really utterly unsound? What else can be the cause of the impermanence of this particular form of the *summum bonum* in the wise Providence of the All-merciful? The Deluding Power tries to cure the spiritual malady of the conditioned souls by the device of the bodily and mental diseases which demonstrate conclusively the worthlessness and trivial nature of the ideal that promises to secure for the possessor of 'a sound mind in a sound body' an abundance of the so-called sensuous happiness obtainable in this world. But the lesson is lost on pedantic medical men whose horizon is straitly squeezed between the earth and sky of the body and mind utterly engrossed in the reckless pursuit of worldly enjoyment. But disease can for this reason neither terrify nor delude the pure soul of the Vaishnava. The nature of the malady of Sree Chaitanya, if rightly diagnosed on the lines indicated, has also the power of curing both the physicians and their patients of the spiritual disease of organised hypocrisy and self-deception wilfully nursed by all worldly people which prevent them from knowing the Truth by subjecting them to the mental delusions of the flesh.

The Lord's Marriage with Sree Vishnupriyā Devi took place about this time. A detailed account of the event has been recorded by Thākur Sree Brindāvandās. Before we enter upon those details it is necessary to dispose of certain considerations that may naturally arise in our minds in connection with this particular

event. The Marriage of the Lord for a second time seems to require an imperative explanation. Strict monogamy on the part of both husband and wife is the highest ideal of marriage, as embodied in the Narrative of Sree Sree Rāma Chandra and Seetā Devi. Conjugal love in the worldly sense also seems to be best guaranteed by such ideal which makes it the right-reserved of two particular persons to be the mutual recipients of connubial love. This alone, it is supposed, can make conjugal love both perfect and pure. According to this test Nimāi Pandit, if He is to be regarded as an *ideal* Husband of His First Consort, should have abstained from marrying a second time. He can not be supposed to have been subject in an abnormal degree to this particular frailty of the flesh and should have been able to remain constant to His First Married 'Love' even after Her Departure from this world.

But the nature as well as the object of the Lord's Marriage are altogether different from those made on this Earth. The Lord's Marriage is the only real marriage. The marriages that take place among the people of this world is an unwholesome caricature of the Reality. The proper way of putting the question mooted above would, therefore, be not that the Marriage of the Lord should conform to the human ideal, but that the human ideal itself may be lived down by the realisation of the substantive Truth, *viz.*, the Marriage of the Lord, of which it happens to be the distorted, unwholesome reflection. With the attainment of the Substantive Truth the automatic subsidence of the malady of the sensual appetite, the basis of the human institution of marriage, needs must be inevitable.

The Lord's Marriage, which is eternally enacted on the spiritual plane, made its appearance apparently under the conditions of limited time and space in order to effect the cure of the disease of sexuality to which the perverse soul is found to be addicted. Amorous love between male and female, which is cherished as one of the rarest privileges of man and as the source of his highest, purest and most exquisite happiness available on this Earth, is not really a blessing at all but on the contrary may become by its abuse the *greatest* of all the curses that afflict those who choose to be the temporary denizens of this world. But it

is by no means possible to get rid of the distemper even if we could be convinced that it is such a possible evil. The *Shāstras* have recommended marriage in place of promiscuous and unrestrained sexual relationship in order to provide a salutary check on sexual indulgence in the only practicable form. This is intelligible. But it is not perfectly clear while they also direct that the sexual act, which must be practised with restraint, should *also* be performed for pleasing Vishnu, and *not* for the gratification of the sensuous appetite itself. The *Shāstras* declare that by pleasing Vishnu parents as well as their issue will be really benefited by obtaining lasting immunity from the clutches of mundane lust.

But it is very difficult to understand what the *Shāstras* really mean when they enjoin the performance of the sexual act of generation to please Vishnu. Are we to suppose that the sexual act is pure in itself and as such is a fit offering for the Lord? That it is, therefore, our duty to indulge in sexual activity desired by God Himself. This does not however, appear to be the proper meaning of the *Shāstric* injunctions regarding 'sattrika marriage.' The object of the *Shāstras* is to discourage sensuality in any form. The sexual act minus sensuality is a contradiction in terms. The *Shāstras* do not plainly tell us so, but they nevertheless clearly leave it to be inferred that the institution of marriage is for the purpose of getting rid of sensuality.

Why is Vishnu dragged into this sensuous affair at all? But how else also is sensuousness to be overcome, if it is desirable to get rid of it? By the Touch of the Lord alone the hold of the flesh on our souls slackens automatically. If one marries really for pleasing Vishnu, the Lord accepts the offering that is sincerely made. The acceptance of the Lord helps the realisation of the object of the offering. But when such an offering is made, the person making it should do so in the right spirit. He is instructed as to the right spirit by the *Shāstras*. If his prayer is offered really to please the Lord, or, in other words, for the purpose enjoined by the *Shāstras* which tell us how the Lord is pleased, the Lord fulfils such prayer by granting its object. The devotee experiences the effect of his conduct in the simultaneous increase of his peace of conscience, the increasing ~~realisation~~ of the spiritual

existence centred in the Lotus Feet of Vishnu and subsidence of sensuous hankering for the things of this world. It is as if fire had burnt up all impurities by its introduction into the scavenger's heap.

Strength and health of body are coveted, among other things for the purpose that they are necessary for the procreation of strong and healthy children. But is not this a begging of the question to be proved? If I have myself no use for strength of body and mind except its blind, mechanical exercise my condition will be altogether chaotic. Order, specially moral order, is impossible without conscious subordination to one supreme purpose. There must be some intelligible object to which all our faculties may be unhesitatingly directed. That object is the attainment of the Lotus Feet of Vishnu where dwells eternally all highest activity, knowledge and bliss. Strength and health of body are by their nature perishable. We do not really know why they come to us and why they leave us. So we should not be unduly attached to them for their sake. If God permits us to possess them for a time we should use them solely for attaining the abiding shelter of the Holy Feet of the Lord.

There is, no doubt, marriage in the Realm of the Absolute That is the True Marriage. That Marriage is eternal. There, the Lord is the only Lover and Husband and all souls are the recipients of His Perfect Love. This is possible only in the Lord and in the spiritual world. If any mortal attempts to have many wives or mistresses in this world he is warned by the *Shāstras* against the utter folly and wickedness of such conduct. The self-same *Shāstras* declare that the Lord is the only Enjoyer of every creature and that Marriage with the Lord is the *summum bonum* of the spiritual condition. There is, of course, no room for any mental or physical activity in such relationship. It is the exercise of the eternal relationship of the pure souls, in their spiritual non-material state, with the All-soul.

Conditioned souls, who happen to be under the lure of the flesh, cannot think of marriage except by reference to mundane sex. But the *Shāstras* enjoin marriage as a help in realising the life eternal by spiritual co-operation between husband and wife, for

living down the mundane sensual instinct. They instruct us to succeed in this by cultivating the effective spiritual desire of pleasing the Lord by our every act. As the Lord can be served under all circumstances and in every externally mundane act, why should the sexual act be an exception to the rule? It should be possible to serve the Lord by the sexual act as by any other form of apparent worldly activity. But the sexual act that is performed as service of the Lord cannot, for that very reason, belong to this mundane plane. It becomes spiritual activity which is absolutely free from all sensuous unwholesomeness. It is better than any negative process.

Sree Chaitanya enacted the *Lecā* of abstaining from all ordained sexual activity during the period of His Married Life. On this point Sree Chaitanya differs wholly from Sree Kṛṣṇa who apparently begot numberless children and also cultivated unconventional amorous relationships with the milk-maids who were not His wedded wives. In Essence, there is of course no difference between the Two. On the spiritual plane abstinence and enjoyment are alike wholesome and are really un-opposed to one another. The Conduct of Sree Chaitanya need not, therefore, be regarded as moral or wholesome in the worldly sense, or as either more or less pure than That of Sree Kṛṣṇa or than that of His own married followers. On the spiritual plane there is no unwholesomeness or objectionable factor. There is only an infinite range of the most varied excellences and exquisitenesses. The Conduct of Sree Chaitanya as Married House-holder is far above the level of that of every other house-holder as setting, in a way that is capable of being grasped by the conditioned soul, the spiritual ideal for his special benefit and safe-guard him from radical misconceptions regarding the Nature of the Union of Sree Rādhikā with Sree Kṛṣṇa, the Only Perfect and Substantive Marriage.

Sree Kṛṣṇa has really only One sweet-heart, viz., Sree Rādhikā as Sree Rādhikā Herself has no other tie except Her Love for Kṛṣṇa. The realisation of Sree Kṛṣṇa by Sree Rādhikā is the only Absolute Realisation of the Absolute. All other realisations are secondary and derivative but true, and are attainable only by the Grace of Sree Rādhikā. The secondary realisations

are, however, both possible and perfect so long as they happen to subserve the Supreme Purpose of Sree Rādhikā. The devotees of Sree Chaitanya attain this dependent perfection of service by following loyally His Teaching as well as Example. Dissociated from either, all souls descend automatically into the sphere of sensuous imperfection.

But the Source of all perfect service is Sree Rādhikā Who is the Counter-whole of Sree Kṛṣṇa. Sree Chaitanya personates the Function of Sree Rādhikā towards Her Eternal Consort, in order to bestow the Loving service of Sree Rādhikā to conditioned souls who have no taste at all for the spiritual service of the Lord. He is the Ideal Devotee, devoted to His Lord. Such Devotee admits no relationship with anything except the Lord. So long as Sree Chaitanya continued to exhibit the *Leelā* of leading the life of a married house-holder He showed clearly that it is possible to marry in order to serve the Lord which is incompatible with the least attachment or love for anybody else except Godhead. He was a dutiful Son, Brother, Husband, Friend, without being attached in the least to Brother, Husband, Friend or Father in the worldly sense. Kṛṣṇa was all along His sole Father, Mother, Brother, Wife, Friend. The devotees were no doubt loved by Sree Chaitanya, as they served Kṛṣṇa in the same way that He Himself did. He refused to be led by any of His devotees and compelled all who desired His Favour to serve only Kṛṣṇa. This Quality of Absolute Independence and Aggressive Superiority of His Service of Kṛṣṇa raises Him above all His associates and followers. But this Superiority must not be imitated by any other person. All other persons should serve Sree Kṛṣṇa in obedience to Sree Chaitanya; that is to say by submission to Sree Rādhikā Who is Kṛṣṇa Himself and Who cannot be disobeyed by His devotees. This premier position of Sree Rādhikā and its *rationale* has been made intelligible to souls under the thraldom of Māya by the Career of Sree Chaitanya. The *jīva* souls should stand to Sree Rādhikā in the same relation as His followers stand to Sree Chaitanya Himself. Sree Kṛṣṇa is served independently by Sree Rādhikā alone, Who employs an infinite army of Her own

servants, *i.e.*, either inseparable or separable portions of Her Essence in Her Service of Kṛṣṇa.

Before beginning his account of the Marriage of Sree Gaur-sundar and Vishnupriyā Devi Thākur Brindāvandās takes particular care to mention that the Supreme Lord, Sree Chaitanya *never even listened to the name of a female*. This precautionary remark is followed up by the observation that Sree Gaurāṅga must on no account be prayed to as the Amorous Lover notwithstanding His identity with Sree Kṛṣṇa. This salutary and most important and explicit prohibition has been too often deliberately ignored by the Gaurnāgaris by deviating deliberately or through ignorance from the path enjoined by Sree Chaitanya Himself and His most authentic biographer and associates. This Sect, arguing from the fact of identity between Sree Chaitanya and Sree Kṛṣṇa, persists in regarding Sree Chaitanya as taking delight in amorous dalliances with His Consorts and Sweethearts at Nabadwip. Under the lead of a corrupt duty these misguided people have not even scrupled to invent imaginary stories of Sree Chaitanya's amorous escapades in order to bring His Activities into line with Those of Sree Kṛṣṇa. This is an unpardonable and immoral travesty of authentic history and an offence at the Holy Feet of Sree Chaitanya and His associates. In fact there cannot be a greater blunder, nor one that is more disastrous in its spiritual and moral consequences, than this open attempt to ignore that very feature of the Career of Sree Chaitanya which constitutes the most characteristic distinction between His *Leelā* and That of Sree Kṛṣṇa. The Activities of Sree Chaitanya are absolutely free from even the appearance of mundane sexuality.

Let us follow in the footsteps of Thākur Brindāvandās in describing the Marriage of the Lord for a second time, and being armed with this basic principle of His Career, try to understand a little more definitely the real significance of the Marriage of Sree Gauranga with Sree Vishnupriyā Devi as we proceed with the Narrative itself.

The Narrative is presented by Thākur Brindāvandās in the following manner. The Supreme Lord was wholly absorbed with tasting the sweets of learning and teaching His students after

the Departure of Sree Lakshmi Devi from this world. But Sachi Devi had no other thought than that of finding a suitable maiden to marry her Son a second time. She at last arrived at a satisfactory decision. She had noticed with approbation the conduct of a Young Maiden, Vishnupriyā, the Daughter of a well-known father, Rājpandit Sanātan Misra. Sachi Devi had frequently met this Girl at the bathing *ghāt* of the Ganges. Sanātan Misra was a native of Nabadwip. He was of a most merciful disposition. He was possessed of a frank and generous nature and the highest faith in Vishnu. His occupation consisted in doing good to others and showing hospitality to all chance-guests. He was truthful, self-controlled, born of a high family. He was well-to-do and had a large number of dependants.

Sree Vishnupriyā Devi, Mother of the world, was the Very Self of Lakshmi Devi, the Eternal Consort of Sree Nārāyana. Sachi Devi had conceived a great affection for the Maiden at the very first sight and regarded Her as worthy of being the Consort of her Son. Vishnupriyā was accustomed from infancy to bathe in the Ganges twice and even thrice every day and had no other interest in Her life save devotion to Her father, mother and Vishnu. She daily met Sachi Devi at the bathing *ghāt* of the Ganges and greeted her feet with great humility. The mother also blessed Her with the greatest affection, 'May Kṛṣṇa bestow on You the Favour of a Worthy Husband.' During her baths in the Ganges Sree Sachi Devi conceived the desire of joining the Girl to her Son in the bond of nuptial union. As a matter of fact the very idea had also already occurred to the Rājpandit and his family, and Sanātan Misra was no less anxious to bestow his Daughter on Sree Gaurasundar.

It so chanced that one day Sachi Devi, having sent for Kāsināth Pandit, requested him to make the formal proposal of the Marriage of his Daughter with her Son to the Rājpandit and also to arrange the same in a definite manner if he was agreeable. Kāsināth Pandit immediately made his way to the Rājpandit and, after being received with great respect, submitted his proposal. It was to this effect, 'I have a proposal to make to you. I would ask you by all means to do what I am going to propose if you

consider it desirable. Give your Daughter to Viswambhar Pandit. I consider the connection altogether suitable. He is the proper Husband for your Daughter as this Best of maidens is also in every way Fit Bride for Him. They suit One Another exactly as Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini.

On this the Rājpandit held a hurried consultation with the members of his family who also pressed upon him the desirability of unhesitating and immediate acceptance of the proposal. Thereupon the Rājpandit informed Kāsināth Pandit that he had no objection to bestow his Daughter on Viswambhar Pandit. If such a connection could be settled for his Daughter he would regard it as nothing less than the reward of the previous good deeds of himself and his whole family.' He informed Kāsināth Pandit to return to Sachi Devi and inform her of his decision. He repeated his assurance that he was prepared to carry out his word by all means. On hearing this Kāsināth Pandit with great satisfaction took his leave and laid his information of what had happened before Sachi Devi. The mother was delighted on hearing the success of her endeavour and busily set about making the necessary preparations for the Marriage of her Son.

On learning of the approaching Nuptials of the Lord all His disciples felt the utmost gladness in their hearts. The great Buddhimanta was the first to offer his services in this connection. He said that he would bear all the expenses of the Marriage. Mukunda Sanjaya protested as it would completely shut himself out. Buddhimanta Khan replied that the Marriage would not be celebrated on the paltry scale of the wedding of a Brāhmaṇa, but on that of a Prince.

The *adhibās* ceremony (preliminary to Wedding) was celebrated with great *eclat* by all friends and followers at the auspicious Moment on the auspicious Day. Huge canopies were hung up and the grounds were enclosed by rows of plantain trees on all sides. Pitchers filled with water, lighted lamps, paddy-grain, milk-curd, twigs of the mango and every other kind of auspicious articles were collected on the spot in huge quantities and the whole ground was beautifully painted with the solution of powdered rice (*Ālipandā*). All Vaishnavas, Brāhmaṇas and other worthy

persons of Nabadwip were invited to partake, in the afternoon, the betel-nut of the *adhibās* ceremony? Musicians duly turned up as soon as it was afternoon and struck up a delightful concert. The music was swelled by the sounds of *mridangā*, *sānāi*, *jai-dhāk*, *karatāl* and other instruments. The 'bards' began to recite the praises of the family and loyal matrons uttered glorificatory ejaculations. The Brāhmaṇas raised the Vedic chant as the Jewel of the best community of the twice-born made His Appearance and assumed His Seat in the centre of the assembled people. The Brāhmaṇas, who had congregated, thereupon experienced a great joy in their minds as they sat in a circle round Sree Gaursundar.

Then they brought out the perfumes, sandal-paste, betel, excellent garlands and distributed among the Brāhmaṇas. They placed the garland round the head, smeared all parts of the body with the sandal-paste and offered a pot-full of betels, to every single guest. Nadiā was but the community of the Brāhmaṇas. There was no end of Brāhmaṇas at Nadiā. It was not possible to ascertain the number of the Brāhmaṇas as they continued to arrive and depart. Among them there were also not a few who were extremely greedy and who, after receiving their presents once, returned in a different dress. Presenting themselves in the thick of the crowd these greedy Brāhmaṇas carried away repeatedly sandal, betel-nut and garlands. All were mad with joy. Who could recognise anybody? The Lord laughingly gave the command to give away sandal and garlands three times to every one. By this Command the Lord condoned the offence of those who, having taken once, persisted to take the articles over and over again. The Lord loves the Brāhmaṇas. He thought in His Mind that if a Brāhmaṇa was caught in the act of taking more than once he ran the risk of being chid by some careless person. It is however, an offence to take anything by cunning in matters spiritual. The Lord, therefore, provided against all these contingencies by ordering all the articles to be given away three times to every one. All Persons were highly delighted by obtaining them in a triple measure and no one again took anything by cunning. Garlands, sandal, betel-nut and betel that were given away in this manner exceeded all limits. The secret how this

was possible no one knew. Let alone what men actually received, that portion of it, which was dropped on the ground in the act of giving away, would have sufficed for five ordinary marriages, if the quantity could be available in the house-hold of any other person. All persons were exceedingly gladdened in their hearts. All said, All praise to this *adhibās*! We have seen millionaires in this Nabadwip. No one's ancestor ever performed such a grand *adhibās* ceremony. No one gave away so ungrudgingly such excellent sandal, garlands, betel-nut and betel.

Presently the Rājpandit arrived with a glad heart and with all the requisites for the *adhibās* ceremony. He was accompanied by Brāhmaṇas, relations and a great company of merry musicians, singers and dancers. The Rājpandit joyfully put the *tilaka* mark on the Forehead of the Lord in accordance with the method enjoined by the Vedas. This joyful Event was acclaimed by a great chorus of the chant of Hari and the singing of hymns of praise. All loyal matrons also acclaimed the Glorious Event. The greatest rejoicings manifested themselves in the form of music and song. Having in this manner performed the *adhibās* ceremony the prince of Brāhmaṇas, Sanātan, returned home. The kinsfolk of the Lord also went forth and performed the *adhibās* ceremony of Lakshmi at the Latter's Home in the same way. Both sides also performed with the greatest zeal every other customary rite.

CHAPTER XVI

MARRIAGE WITH SREE VISHNUPRIYĀ DEVI—(Contd.)

ON the auspicious Morn following the *adhibās* ceremony the Lord bathed in the Ganges and performed the worship of Vishnu. Thereafter in the company of all relations and friends He applied Himself to the due performance of *nandimukh* and other rites.

There was a great uproar of music, dance and song. Auspiciatory shouts of praise were raised on all sides. Innumerable pots filled with water, paddy-grain, milk-curd, lighted lamps, twigs of the mango, were placed at the door-ways, inside the rooms and all about the yard. On all sides flags of diverse colours gaily waved in the breeze. Plantain-trees, to which branches of the mango were tied, were planted in every direction.

Then the mother was busily occupied in the company of all the matrons with the due performance of all customary rites. Having first of all worshipped the Ganges the joyful party proceeded to the site of the goddess Shasthi to the sound of music. Having worshipped Shasthi the mother and her entourage visited the homes of all friends and went through the customary performance at each household. The party returned home after having accomplished these protracted functions. Sachi Devi made all the ladies heavy presents of fried rice, plantain, oil, betel and vermillion. By the Will of the Lord the articles exceeded all measure and Sachi Devi gave away to every one in five and seven-fold measure. All the ladies literally swam in oil. There was none whose heart's desire was not completely fulfilled. There were similar high rejoicings in Lakshmi's home under the conduct of Lakshmi's mother. In a fit of ecstatic delight the Rājpandit flung away all his resources in these festivities.

After the due performance of all these ceremonies Sree Gaur-sundar had a respite which He utilised in making presents of eatables and clothing to all the Brâhmaṇas, evincing, in the method, the greatest humility. He accorded the fullest respect to all of them in due proportion of the worth of each. The Brâhmaṇas then returned to their homes for their meals after blessing the Lord with the greatest affection.

As the day wore into afternoon all the people applied themselves to the pleasant function of robing the Lord. This was an elaborate process. The Whole Body of the Lord was annointed with sandal-paste and other perfumes with well-designed inter-spaces. On the Forehead of the Lord a crescent was painted with sandal inside which was put the charming *tilaka* mark made of perfume. A wonderful Crown adorned His Beautiful Head. His Whole Frame was covered with garlands. Excellent cloth of the finest grain was worn in the triple girdled style (*trikachha*). His Beautiful Eyes were painted with collyrium. Paddy-grain, *durbâ* grass and cotton thread were tied to His Wrist. Tender shoots of the plantain with the mirror were placed in His Hand. A pair of golden pendants hang down from His Ears. The upper parts of His Arms were bound with dazzling chains of various precious Jewels. Whatever decoration was likely to set forth the Beauty of each Limb was put in the proper part by all the people with the greatest delight. All persons of both sexes were fascinated by the Sight of the Appearance of the Lord attired as Bridegroom and in their joy had no thoughts on their own account.

When the last quarter of the day still lingered all people gave their opinion that it was time to make the auspicious start so that the Lord might arrive at the house of the Bride in the hour of twilight, after perambulating the whole of Nabadwip for the space of one full *prahara*.

And now Buddhimanta Khân joyfully brought up an excellent litter (*dolâ*) which he had specially made for the occasion. There arose a great tumult of song and music. The Brâhmaṇas recited the auspiciatory texts of the Veda. The bards began to recite eulogies. Joy assumed a visible form on all sides.

Then, after passing His mother on the right and having bowed with great respect to the Brāhmaṇas, as Sree Gaurāṅga seated Himself on the *dola*, there arose all around Him the triumphal shouts of benedictions. The ladies uttered *jais*. There could be heard nothing but auspicious sounds in every direction.

The Lord first of all proceeded to the side of the Ganges. There He saw the half-moon just overhead. Thousands of lights now began to burn. There was a great variety of fire-works. The soldiers of Buddhimanta Khān marched in front and were followed by his other employees in double file. Behind them marched the bearers of flags of different colours. Pantomimes and clowns in various guises followed. Dancers in innumerable groups danced along with the utmost gaiety. *Jai-dhāk*, *beer-dhāk*, *mridanga*, *kahal*, *pataha*, *dayarh*, conch, flute of reed, *karatāl*, *barangā*, horn, instruments with five different melodies, in countless number, made up the vast concert. The Lord laughed as He noted with pleasure millions of children dancing along with great merriment in the midst of the musicians. On beholding that great rejoicing not children only but all the wise men joined the procession dancing by discarding all shame.

Having arrived on the bank of the Ganges the party of the Bridegroom halted and performed, for a short while, dance, song and hilarious music. This was succeeded by incessant raining of flowers. After making obeisance to the Ganges the party traversed merrily the whole of Nabadwip. On beholding the equipages of the Marriage that are far above anything mortal, all people experienced a great ecstasy in their minds. The people said, 'We have seen many big marriages. Never did we see such grandeur'. Men and women of fortunate Nadiā in this manner floated on the tide of happiness on beholding the Lord.

All were happy save only those Brāhmaṇas who had beautiful unmarried daughters in their homes. Those Brāhmaṇas gave vent to their sorrows. 'I could not bestow my daughter on such a Groom! I have no luck; whence could it be otherwise?' Thākūr Brindāvandās describing the Marriage Festivities of the Lord, in the words quoted above, makes his obeisance to the feet of the

residents of Nabadwip who possess the power of beholding Beatific Sights like these.

Thus did the Lord merrily journey from one quarter of the town to another of the whole of Nabadwip. He then came to the residence of Rājpandit just in the hour of twilight and was received by multitudinous acclamations which mingled with the tumult raised by the musicians of the parties of Bride and Bridegroom vying with each other. Rājpandit, advancing with great respect, took the Lord in his arms from the *dola* and conveyed Him to His Seat. The Pandit scattered flowers with his own hands, being perfectly oblivious of his own body by joy on beholding his Son-in-law.

Then having brought out all the requisites of the ceremonial election of Bridegroom the Brāhma seated himself to accept the Lord formally as his Son-in-law. He duly performed this ceremony of election by the offering of water for washing the Feet, the requisites of worship, water to rinse the Mouth, clothing and ornaments. Then his spouse appeared with the other ladies and began to perform the auspiciatory rites according to the approved form. The ladies placed grains of paddy and blades of the *durbā* grass on the Beautiful Head of the Lord and waved a lighted lamp, of seven wicks fed by clarified butter, in front of the Lord. They continued to ejaculate the glorificatory note as they cast at Him fried rice and shell. Thus did they perform the customary rites.

And now, having decked Her in all Her ornaments, they brought out Sree Lakshmi Devi, conveying Her on a seat. On this the friends of the Lord merrily lifted Him up by His seat. Then, according to the custom, having put up an inner screen round the Lord, the Bride was made to perambulate the Lord seven times by keeping Him on Her right. After perambulating the Lord seven times Lakshmi Devi placed Herself in front of Him in the attitude of obeisance.

Then there was a great throwing of flowers; and the instruments of both parties put up a great music. On all sides male and female continued to employ their voices in acclamation. Joy's own self came down from on high in his visible form.

Sree Lakshmi Devi, Mother of the world, made the surrender of Herself by placing the garland of flowers at the Feet of the Lord. Gaursundar, with a slight Smile, took up the garland and placed it round the Neck of Lakshmi. Then Lakshmi and Nārāyana began to throw flowers at Each Other with great alacrity. Brahmā and other gods, remaining invisible, merrily sent showers of flowers. The partisans of Lakshmi and the Lord now got up a violent quarrel, on behalf of the Bride and Groom, with minds delirious with joy. The followers of Lakshmi and those of the Lord seemed to prevail alternately as the people continued with peals of laughter to inform the Lord. A slight Smile played on the Beautiful Face of the Lord. On beholding this all people swam in the current of transcendental bliss.

Thousands of great torches burnt brightly. Nothing could be heard on account of the tumultuous music. The music and acclamations of the charming rite of '*catching the First Glimpse of Each Other's Moon-like Faces*' pervaded all worlds, so great was that mighty uproar. Having thus gaily performed the ceremony of *Srimukchandrikā* Sree Gaursundar took His Seat in the company of Sree Lakshmi.

Thereafter Rājpandit also assumed a seat, with his mind overflowing with delight, for the purpose of making the offering of his Daughter. Having duly offered water for washing the Feet, the requisites for worship, water for cleansing the Mouth, he uttered the formula of his decision to offer his Daughter. The pious father of Sree Lakshmi Devi, desiring only the Pleasure of Vishnu, made over his Daughter into the Hands of the Lord. He then gave expression to his pent-up joy by giving away as dowry goodly cows, land, beds, male and female slaves, in great abundance. He then caused Sree Lakshmi Devi to be seated on the Left Side of the Lord and began to perform the ceremony of offering libation to fire. After performing all the Scriptural and customary rites he conducted the Bridegroom and Bride to the inner apartments. Vaikunṭha manifested itself in the house of Rājpandit. At last the Couple sat down to meal. Lakshmi and Kṛṣṇa remained joyously together during that night unto supreme benediction.

Who can express in words the joy that possessed Sanātan Pandit and his whole family? Sanātan and his family now realised the same high fortune as fell of yore to the lot of Nagnajit, Janaka, Vishmaka, Jambubanta,—as the fulfilment of his previous devoted service of Vishnu.

At break of day, the Essence of all the worlds performed the remaining social rites. In the afternoon, as the hour of returning home drew near, there began a great display of music, song and dance. Loud acclamations rent every direction. The ladies shouted *jais*. The Brāhmaṇas recited blessings and read *slokas* from the Veda in keeping with the occasion of starting. *Dhāk, pataha, sānāī, baranya, karatāl*, played vociferously, vying with one another.

The Lord, having bowed to the superiors, ascended the *dolā* in the company of Lakshmi. All the people raised the triumphal shout of the Name of Hari as they formed in procession and led away the Jewel of the race of the twice-born.

All those persons, who beheld Them as They proceeded on Their way, praised Them most admiringly and in many diverse ways. The ladies obtaining a Sight of the Pair said, ‘This Girl is most fortunate. She must have served Kamalā and Pārbati during Her many lives.’ Some of them said, ‘They seem to be Hara and Gauri themselves.’ Another lady declared, ‘Methinks they are Kamalā and Sree Hari’. There were those who expressed the view that the Couple were certainly Rati and Kāmadeva. To the minds of others They seemed like Indra and Sachi. Some held that They most resembled Rāmachandra and Seetā. Thus said all those ladies of excellent deeds. Thākur Brindāvandās expresses once more his appreciation of the high fortune of the male and female inhabitants of Nabadvip who had power to witness these Glories of the Lord. All people over the whole of Nadiā overflowed with happiness by the Auspicious Glance of Lakshmi and Nārāyana.

The Marriage Procession moved along with the greatest merriment, with dance, song and music, amid a continuous shower of flowers. Then in an Auspicious Moment ushered by every blessing Lakshmi and Nārāyana merrily arrived at Their Home. The

mother attended by the loyal matrons most gladly welcomed the Daughter-in-law into the House. As Lakshmi and Nārāyana entered Their Apartments and assumed Their Seats a mighty acclamation of Praise filled the whole universe.

Thākur Brindāvandās, with due sense of the nature of the occasion, writes that the joy that manifested itself is beyond all expression and that no one can describe that Glory. If the eye but once beholds the Glow of the Person of the Lord that fortunate person is cleansed of all his sins and repairs to the Realm of Vai-kunṭha. All those people had a direct vision of the Marriage of the Lord. The Lord rightly bears the Appellations of 'Merciful' and 'Lord of the humble'.

Then the Lord satisfied all the dancers, bards and beggars, by the gift of clothing, money and kind words. The Lord with His Own Hands merrily gave away clothing to all the Brāhmaṇas, relatives, friends and to everyone severally. The Lord bestowed His Embrace on Buddhimaṇa Khān whose joy no word can describe. These *Leelās* have never any interval. The Veda says of Their Appearance and Disappearance. Who can even in a hundred years describe all the *Leelās* that took place within the space of a *single danda*? 'Accepting on my head', says Thākur Brindāvandās, 'the Command of Nityānanda Swarup, I write the mere summary in pursuance of His mercy'. He concludes the account of the Divine Marriage with the remark that whoever reads or listens to these *Leelās* of the supreme Lord, verily enjoys communion with Gaurāṅga Himself.

We have attempted to give above the account of the Marriage of Sree Gaursundar and Sree Vishnupriyā Devi in the words of Thākur Brindāvandās himself in order that the reader may have, as far as possible, the actual words of the highest authority, the *Pṛyaśa*, of the *Leelā* of Sree Chaitanya. It will be our subordinate duty to try to understand this severely compressed account in the light of the commentators. An attempt on this line has already been made in a previous chapter in discussing the Marriage of the Lord with Sree Lakshmi Devi. We shall confine ourselves here to the task of adding a few remarks to what has already been presented to the reader on the same subject at that place.

The Lord makes His Appearance in this world with His Paraphernalia. When the Lord chooses to manifest the *Leelā* of the Devotee He is attended by all His Consorts Each in Her corresponding appropriate role. Sree Chaitanya has Two Consorts, appearing successively One at a time. Sree Lakshmi Devi is that Aspect of the Divine Power Who is termed 'Sree' or 'Beauty' by the Scriptures. She represents Spiritual Law, Who is eternally in attendance on Her Lord. Even when the Lord chooses to appear in this world He is served by the Higher Law of the Spiritual Realm. This does not require to be masked as it is not liable to be misunderstood even by bound souls. But as the Divine Manifestation grows towards maturity the Regulated Service recedes to the background making way for Spontaneous Devotion. This also has to make room for the Highest Form, *viz.*, Service in apparent separation.

It is not the purpose at this stage to enter fully into the subject of the Nature of the Divine Power, and Her various Faces. In Krishna *Leelā* there is no use of any restraint by the Divinity in His Pastimes. The Realm and Consorts of Godhead appear in that *Leelā* as They are. In Chaitanya *Leelā* They appear in Their mellower form of Relationship of love for the bound soul. The bound soul is not banished from the Pastimes of Krishna because Krishna makes no difference between one soul and another and is always prepared to deal with a person in accordance with the latter's disposition and according as service is rendered or refused. Sree Chaitanya *Leelā* exhibits the indiscriminate Mercy of the Lord to bound souls. This means that Krishna *Leelā* in the Positive Aspect is not altogether closed to the bound soul. The latter may even serve Krishna by His Grace even in this world by the process of service of the highest order.

The point that is to be specially noticed in this connection is the fact that the bound soul may serve the Lord in exactly the same way as the soul in the state of Grace. The Lord with *all* His Consorts, Associates, Realm and Paraphernalia is always at the door of the bound soul and ever Willing to offer Him His very Highest Service that is rendered to the Lord in the Divine Realm proper.

The very statement of the above proposition suggests a number of most reasonable objections. If the Lord is with the bound soul as much as He is with His eternal devotees why cannot the former always have the sight of Him and His? The reply is that this is so in order to add a special charm to his service and one that is coveted by even the purest souls but which is not available to all of them although it is unsolicitously open to every bound soul. The very condition, *viz.*, the bound state, helps the most charming realisation of the eternal function. The bound soul cannot see Krishna and His eternal devotees as They really are. But the bound soul is privileged to realise that Krishna and His eternal devotees are identical with Sree Chaitanya and His associates, Whom he can see and serve with his available faculties if he is only willing to do so.

But the bound soul can also see Lakshmi Devi and Vishnupriyā Devi, Mother Sachi and Sree Jaggannāth Misra, in Their real eternal Forms. This is so because unless they see at least the pure soul as he really is, they cannot understand the relationship of separation from the Lord to which they are doomed by the bound state. This vision is dependent on the fulfilment of the condition of willing acceptance of its real import. But this inclination is rarely coveted for the very reason that the wish is realised without any difficulty. This is so unbelievable!

If one reads this account without complete acceptance of and faith in its conclusions he will necessarily fail to realise its truth. Hypothetical or tentative acquiescence in certain assumptions, for the purpose of enjoying the charms of an artistic conception based on those assumptions, is not sufficient for a reader of the Chaitanya Bhāgavat if one is really anxious to follow the method of self-discipline laid down in the work as the indispensable condition for the proper realisation of the substantive Truth. This faith in the only cognisable Forms of the Reality is not natural to the bound state and is apparently opposed to the same. At this point the help and guidance of *sādhus* or self-realised souls become an absolute necessity.

The bound soul is ever tending to fly away after the illusive appearances of the Deluding Energy. He is convinced that he will find in such pursuit, in the long run, what his perverted nature most ardently desires, *vis.*, boundless sensuous enjoyment for himself. It is, therefore, almost impossible to expect him to destroy these seemingly sole objects of his heart's desire by his own hands. This is the task that the *sādhū* has got to perform for him for the benefit of the bound soul. The *sādhū* is seconded in his efforts by the spiritual Scriptures but is opposed by everything else in this world. This is not inexplicable. The erring soul has to choose between the persuasions of the spiritual Scriptures supporting the *sādhū* and the dissuasions of the whole phenomenal world, on the very threshold of the spiritual life.

The decisive part is, therefore, played by one's own judgment. It is necessary to exercise one's judgment with a due sense of the far-reaching consequences to oneself that are involved. The Scriptures as well as the *sādhūs* can only persuade but can never compel the bound soul to accept the course of self-discipline that is absolutely necessary for self-realisation.

Sree Lakshmi Devi and Sree Vishnupriyā Devi are the Eternal Consorts of the Supreme Lord and possess the special capacity of appearing with the Lord for the purpose of being visible in Their actual Forms to the bound souls, in order to effect their deliverance. When it is further explained that Sree Lakshmi Devi is described in the Scriptures as the Power Who is identical with 'Beauty' or 'Law' the reader, who is not sufficiently mindful of the conditions to be fulfilled for the purpose of realising the proper nature of the Consorts of Godhead, may be disposed to suspect that the Truth is being attempted to be figuratively set forth by a number of cleverly devised allegorical forms and that it should be sufficient to bear in mind *in the abstract* the principles involved without taking the concrete side into serious consideration. The less sceptical may fall into the opposite inconsistency of attempting to take everything in its literal worldly sense. Both may unconsciously ignore the function of the *sādhū* as being absolutely necessary for obtaining access to the Reality.

There are, of course, those who may maintain that if the Reality cannot be realised without submitting to a *sādhu* as the condition of enlightenment how can one be sure that the *sādhu* and his Scriptures may not also mislead? They may also quote actual instances of persons who have gone astray, by admission of the *sādhus* themselves, after a course of training with them. The validity of the objection consists in the fact that the initiative in the form of choice of course ever lies, and must ever lie, with the individual soul. The *sādhu*, if he is not properly served, will remain absolutely unknown to the disciple after the longest period of apparently strenuous and faithful service. The Truth will not submit to the dominating efforts of any individual soul, neither does He accept the compelled 'service' (?) of anyone. The pure soul accepts the whole responsibility of this position and is accordingly enabled to see the light by which to walk loyally.

The polemical and disbelieving trifler with Truth alone is ever effectively shut out from the Realm of the Absolute. The bound soul is accustomed to submit tentatively to hypothetical courses of instruction and training under hypothetical teachers of apparent truths. He is also insensibly but stubbornly disposed to carry the same procedure into the Realm of the Absolute. It is the function of the *sādhu*, of his own accord, to warn all erring souls against these confirmed errors of habit. It is for the individual soul himself to accept or reject the advice. Those, who have undue faith in the tentative method, resent the advice which they are naturally disposed to regard as uncalled-for and mischievous. The tendency is never fully eradicated till one stands face to face with the Reality. This is the cause of the risk and uncertainty that have to be faced by the novice, but they are quite inevitable and perfectly in accordance with the Absolute position itself.

So Sree Lakshmi Devi and Sree Vishnupriyā Devi need neither be believed nor disbelieved as Consorts of the Divinity by any one prior to understanding the nature of the relationship in which one is required by the conditions of the case to place himself in order to be enabled to grasp the issue of the advocates of realisable Absolute Truth. The issue need not be confounded with any hollow hypotheses of erring mortals. Nor need it be conceded by

one's condescending oral assent to possess the transcendental nature which is neither comprehensible by the intellect of the bound soul nor compatible in practice with any of his worldly interests. For such persons the proper attitude should be to try to understand the preliminary conditions with the help of the Narrative and abstain from all 'opinions' on the Nature of the Divine Power Herself till the *sādhū* has had time to explain what he requires to know further.

These remarks hold also in the case of the Third Plenary Power that ever accompanies the Supreme Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya whenever He chooses to appear in this world. She bears the name of '*Neclā*' in the Shāstras and is no other than the 'Abode of Godhead' (*Sridhama*). The 'Place' where the Lord appears in this world is His Own Plenary Power, or Eternal Consort. This should dispose of the gross and profane speculations of the sensualist schools regarding the subject of Divine Amour, the relationship that subsists between the Lord and His Plenary Powers *Shree Bhū* and *Neclā* Who bear the names of Lakshmi, Vishnupriyā and Nabadvipdhāma in the transcendental vocabulary of the Scriptures Whose Natures are realisable only by the devotees of Lord Chaitanya.

All this at the first sight cannot but appear to be 'bizarre' and 'unsettling' to all persons contentedly moving on the plane of three dimensions. Such persons may even affect to regard the statements as the 'products' of a diseased imagination and their own 'fool's paradise' as the undoubted abode of sanity and wisdom.

But such a view does not remove every difficulty from the path even of those who choose deliberately to shut their ears to the pleadings of the rational instinct. The so-called mundane 'positivists' want a real standing-ground for their perverted speculations. Those wise persons cherish the wild faith that by putting the cart before the horse greater results are to be gained than by the ordinary method of obeying the voice of humdrum reason and bitter experience.

The names '*Lakshmi*', '*Vishnupriyā*', '*Nabadwip*' are not words denoting anything limited or worldly. Neither are they mere

symbols or conceptions of any worldly entity. They are the Divine Consorts Themselves. The Transcendental Nomenclature is inconceivable except by Their Grace identical with the Mercy of Godhead Himself Who ever acts through His Plenary Powers in His Dealings with *jivas* who are dissociated emanations of the Pure Essence of His Marginal Potency.

As a matter of fact the Activities of the Lord, even when He chooses to Appear in this world, remain absolutely unintelligible to the conditioned soul as long as the latter persists in the attitude of refusal to seek the help of the Plenary Spiritual Power of Godhead for realising the same. For understanding the *Leelā* of Sree Gaurāṅga it is necessary to approach the subject by willing, convinced and active submission to real *sādhus* who are the eternal servants of Sridhāma Nabadvip, the Eternal Realm of the Divinity, Who alone can confer the service of Lakshmi Devi and Vishnupriyā Devi Who serve Sree Gaurasundar with Amorous Devotion of the most distinctive delicious types that are comprehensible to conditioned souls only by Their Grace. This comprehension is the only proper goal of all individual souls gone astray and is identical with the service of Sree Sree Rādhā-Govinda attainable in the unalloyed spiritual state.

For these reasons we abstain from dealing with this subject more specifically at this place. The Doings of the Lord as Householder can be understood only in the light of the practice and teachings of the Lord as a Sannyāsin after His apparent Renunciation of the world. The object of sitting at the Feet of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya, the Practising Ascetic Teacher of the Absolute Truth, is to be enabled to understand, through the practice of service taught by Himself by Example and Precept, the Absolute Truth as He is realisable by souls who appear to His loyal disciple in the Form of Sree Gaurasundar dwelling eternally in Sridham Nabadvip served with Amorous Devotion by His Consorts Sree Lakshmi Devi and Sree Vishnupriyā Devi by the method of loving separation. Such realisation can alone enable a conditioned soul to attain the highest service of the Divine Pair Sree Sree Rādhā-Govinda on the termination of his wrong connection with the mundane plane.

CHAPTER XVII

TRIUMPHS OF LEARNING

THE LORD taught His pupils in all places. His usual resort for the purpose in the evening was the side of the Ganges. On His arrival there He took His Seat, as at the Academy, in the midst of His pupils. The Performances of the Lord as Teacher on the bank of the holy stream remained indelibly impressed on the memory of all beholders. Sree Brindāvandās Thākur searched all the Scriptures to find an analogy by an event of the triple universe. He rejected the following suggestions after due consideration of their claims. The analogy of the Moon surrounded by the stars of Heaven was rejected on the ground that the Moon is spotted and subject to the processes of waxing and waning whereas the Nature of the Spotless Subject of comparison is Eternally 'Full'. Bṛhaspati, teacher of the gods, does not furnish a proper analogy in as much as he happens to be a partisan of the *devas*, whereas our Lord is the Partisan and Help of all sides. Cupid god of worldly amour, does not offer the requisites of a proper analogue. The mind in which he makes his appearance is distracted, whereas on the Appearance of the Lord in one's mind all other bonds are snapped and the mind attains the state of supreme purity and satisfaction. In the same way all other analogies also appeared to be seriously defective. There could be found only one exception. There is real analogy with the Pastimes of the Son of Sree Nanda, surrounded by the cowherds, on the banks of the Kālindi (Yamunā). It seemed to all people as if the Self-same Krishna Chandra, in the company of those very cowherds, having put on the Form of the twice-born, now re-enacted His Identical Pastimes on the bank of the Ganges.

All those, who were privileged to have the Sight of the Lord discoursing to His pupils on the bank of the Ganges, experienced a gladness that baffles all description. They were no less impressed by the display of His Power, and everybody secretly opened his mind to others on this subject. Some said, 'Such Power does not belong to man'. Some declared that the Brāhmaṇa was the Integral Portion of Kṛṣṇa Himself. Others said that 'He seemed to be the Person of the prophecy that a Brāhmaṇa will be King in Gauḍa, and held that his conclusion was confirmed by the fact that He had all the Bodily Signs that prognosticate the King of Kings. Every one made these remarks regarding the Lord in accordance with one's own particular bent of mind.

The Lord expounded the Scriptures on the bank of the Ganges, adversely criticizing the teachers. He exposed the falsity of their interpretations by establishing their contradictions and, after refuting all different opinions, re-established them all. He challenged every one to disputation with Himself and promised to recognise as a real scholar every one who would fairly meet Him only once. He denied that any one possessed the power of holding his ground in controversy against Him even by accepting the very interpretations that He offered. Thus did the Lord make His Boast and His Bragging Words destroyed all vanities of every one who listened to them.

There was no end of the pupils of the Lord. They formed themselves into innumerable groups and pursued their studies at many different places in the town. Every day ten or twenty Brāhmaṇa boys prostrated themselves at the Feet of the Lord and begged to be allowed to study under Him. They prayed for His Mercy that they might have the good fortune of being enlightened by Him to the least extent. The Lord laughed at their words observing that what they said was most excellent. The number of the Lord's pupils went on increasing apace every day in this manner.

Thus the Lord held His learned sessions surrounded by His countless pupils by the side of the Ganges. It was a most edifying Sight that was witnessed by His fortunate contemporaries.

The whole of Nabadwip was rendered free from all cause of sorrow by the Holy Influence of the Supreme Lord and all those, who were privileged to witness the learned Performances of the Lord, were regarded in subsequent years as persons of rare good fortune the very sight of whom had power to free one from the bondage of the world. Sree Brindāvandās Thākur laments his misfortune for not having been born at that time, and cherishes the hope that he might retain his recollection of those Activities of the Lord at every birth and be born as His servant wherever Sree Chaitanya and Nityānanda manifest Their Divine Activities.

The above, from the pen of His first biographer, who had his information from Nityānanda Himself, uncontradicted by any other writers of that or subsequent period, proves conclusively, apart from the evidence of His associates and followers regarding the Substantive Teaching of the Lord, that Sree Chaitanya enjoyed an extraordinary reputation as Disputant and Exponent of the *Shāstras* among His contemporaries. Those contemporaries were specially given to the cultivation of the Science of Polemics which had been perfected at Nabadwip to a point never rivalled anywhere else either then or since. Lest this fact fail to be sufficiently grasped by posterity Thākur Brindāvandās repeats it over and over again and in a most definite manner. As for instance he gives prominence to the fact that the Lord was never chary of denouncing the interpretations of other Professors, although Nabadwip was at the time full of a countless host of the most eminent teachers, proverbially jealous of their scholastic reputation to whose ears the denunciations of the Lord were sure to be carried in no time. But no Professor in all the different branches of learning, which were cultivated with equal zeal at Nabadwip, ever dared to meet the Lord in open controversy on any issue. Every one was terribly afraid of Him, showed the greatest deference to His Views and avoided any direct disputation with Him. And if the Lord was pleased to speak kindly to any one that fortunate person became at once His most devoted servant. All the people were fully aware of His Extraordinary Cleverness even from Infancy and all dreaded and obeyed Him. They also knew that no one had really the

power to excel or teach Him anything new. Yet no one suspected that He was any other than an ordinary mortal.

The language of Thākura Brindāvandās, coming from one who, although an admirer of the Lord and using the poetic diction, and after making every allowance for so-called oriental hyperbole that is supposed by unimaginative empiric thinkers of this country and elsewhere to specially characterize all religious literature, makes it plain that Sree Chaitanya was not a particularly submissive kind of a person, nor did He seek to serve Godhead in the current manner, but was certainly not an opponent of rational, or even empiric enquiry on any subject. He was also at the same time a scoffer of all self-sufficient superficial pedantary. These qualities were misunderstood by the orthodox Vaishnavas also, among whom were persons distinguished for their secular learning as well as piety. This Incomprehensible Nature of the Young Professor, Who scorned everybody and submitted to none, marked Him out as a most extraordinary Person and extorted the unwilling admiration of friends and foes alike. That it was not willing admiration in all cases we shall know from the sequel. His uncompromising attitude and hostile talk gave deep offence to the learned pedants, who only waited for the opportunity of indulging their furious animosity against the dreaded Scholar Whom they could not meet in honest controversy.

The attitude of the learned circles of Nadiā demonstrates the radical defect of empiric intellectualism which does not at all realise the gravity of the misfortune of its divorce from the Absolute Truth. Its abstract idealistic speculations are a sorry refuge from the dangers of the grosser forms of materialistic positivism. This material world is not an illusion. The idealist, who affects to look down upon it, is bound to be brought to grief in no time by the actual force of the very circumstances that he pretends to contemn. The scientific instinct revolts from the sterile and fictitious triumphs of the mere idealist. It seeks to satisfy the need of our nature for the substantive Truth by creating opportunities of expanded materialistic activities in defiance of barren idealism. Sree Gaurasundar, however, did not meet the idealists with the weapon of grosser materialism. He was content to point out the

glaring defects of their synthesis with the help of empiric logic itself, as they could not fail to understand such argument. By the very nature of the case it is possible by means of empiric logic to demolish its own false constructions and to demonstrate the necessity of a change of method of investigation for the attainment of the Real Truth.

The difficulty begins after this critical juncture has been reached. Even those, who are prepared to admit their defect in controversy, do not always realise the necessity of accepting the conclusions of their victorious enemy. The out and out sincerity of judgment, that would lead to such acceptance, is very rare and implies to an attitude of causeless devotion to the Truth for His Own sake. The pedants of Nabadwip did not care to learn the Truth from Sree Chaitanyaadeva. Neither is this an absolute and immediate drawback for progressing in empiric knowledge. A person can improve his empiric knowledge by self-application unassisted by any other person by the study of books. Sree Gaur-sundar led His campaign against the futility of this method for attainment of the knowledge of the Absolute. Such knowledge, He contended, can only be obtained by submitting to receive it from a person who is in possession of it.

The necessity of *personal* mediation of the teacher for attainment of the Knowledge of the Absolute introduces a condition which it is not possible to establish fully by the method of empiric logic. The necessity of the acceptance of the principle of personal subordination is also consistently enough denied by the empiricists in respect of their own achievement. Their misunderstanding is due to the fact that they cannot realise the identity of the Teacher of the Absolute with the Message itself. They want to accept the Message by leaving out the Bearer of the Same. They have evidently less respect and necessity for the servant than for the Master. Their own logic should be able to tell them that the Absolute must by His Nature be unattainable by any form of conditional submission. The mundane egoistic reservation is to be completely discarded if one is to approach the Presence of Sree Krishna. The Bhāttācharyyas and Misras of Nabadwip, proud of their learning and

fallacious self-sufficiency failed to understand the necessity and duty of absolute submission to the real teacher of the Word of God.

They preferred to continue on the path of admitted ignorance and sinfulness. This course appeared to them to be less intolerable than absolute submission to the servant of Kṛṣṇa. Such persons are by temperament doomed to eternal perdition and the only method that was applicable to their case was that of merciless castigation in the form of elaborate exposure of their sophistries, by which method alone they might be prevented from misleading less wicked foolish people from the path of the pure service of the Lord. The fact, that the Bhāttāchāryyas and Misras were not redeemed by Sree Gaursundar, has been used, by dishonest pedants who are not on principle prepared to enquire with an unbiased mind into the nature of the issue itself that divided the two parties, as a circumstance that proves the unconvincing nature of the position taken up by Sree Gaursundar. There cannot well be a grosser form of impiety under the garb of piety than the unholy assertion that the suffrage of the ignorant people of this sinful world establishes the claim of the Absolute to our unconditional allegiance to His Holy Feet. Such perversity of judgment is the punishment that justly overtakes all insincere natures who, while professing to seek the Truth, are wilfully bent upon amassing the means for the gratification of their own ignorant vanity. To those abnormal people the uncompromising attitude of Sree Gaursundar's advocacy of the Truth appeared to be only an instance of ignorant arrogance greater than their own. They were so completely blinded by their insatiable passion for sensuous gratification that they were unable to distinguish between their own selfish vanity and the Arrogance of Sree Gaursundar which their own vanity necessitated and which was intended to break their impious perversity, or at any rate, to lessen the same, or prevent it from grossly misleading innocent people to the utter ruin of both.

This Attitude of Sree Gaursundar was also in glaring contrast to that of the other Vaishnavas who did not care to oppose in this drastic manner the pretensions of those graceless atheists; but it was none the less best calculated to promote the real well-being

of all. Those who are disposed to draw a distinction between arrogance directed to the service of the Absolute and humility practised with the same object in favour of the latter, make out difference which does not really exist. Real humility, that submits unconditionally to the Absolute, never submits to minister to the pleasures of the atheists. When those, who are not disposed to submit to the Absolute, pretend to be humble in their relations with worldly people, they do so for gaining the reputation of humility. The really humble person has no selfish ambition and is, therefore, in a position to serve the Truth and nothing but the Truth under all circumstances. The true and constant servants of the Absolute alone are privileged to understand how Godhead may be best served by loyal arrogance and most basely betrayed by self-seeking show of humility. Godhead is never served by external conduct. Good manners in themselves have no value. They have their value in and through perfect loyalty to the Truth, which is the one thing needful. Good manners, practised by worldly people, are but a snare and a most insidious form of gross impiety.

The above considerations enable us to understand that no one can know the Lord unless the Lord makes Himself known to him of His Own accord. Sree Gaursundar, during all this period while He was engaged in the task of silencing the proud scholars of the centre of learning of the Age by exposing their utter ignorance of all subjects, failed to be recognised as the Lord of all learning alike by pious Vaishnavas and the atheistical teachers of Nabadwip. But we need not suppose that His Activities were, therefore, less important or a lesser evidence of His highest beneficent Mercy. The Lord is ever full of unlimited beneficence; but He reserves the right of manifesting the true Nature of His Divine Activities only to such persons Whom He chooses to favour. During all the time that Gaursundar was indulging in these learned Pastimes not a single person in the whole Nabadwip recognised His Divinity, although these Performances were most extraordinary even from the point of view of empiric scholarship. In this connection the following remarkable incident, which took place at this time, deserves our most attentive consideration.

A great scholar of the name of Keshab Bhatta came to Nabadwip. He was a famous controversialist and had assumed the proud title of 'Conqueror of all quarters' to proclaim His victories over the scholars of all parts and also as an open challenge to the learned whom he summoned to recognise his superiority if they did not venture to engage in open discussion through fear of public exposure of their inferiority. It was the traditional ambition of the Pandits of this country to seek the proud distinction of being the recognised superior of all learned persons, or as the 'Conqueror of all quarters' (*digrījāyi*). The conditions, that such a claim gave rise to, were that the vanquished had to put down in writing the fact of their defeat and hand over to the victor their written confession of inferiority.

Keshab Bhatta, after defeating in controversy the Pandits of other parts of the country, appeared in Nabadwip, which was then reputed as the greatest centre of learning in India, with the object of compelling the great Pandits of Nabadwip also to admit his superior scholarship. Keshab Bhatta was fully confident of his ability to defeat the Pandits of Nabadwip for the reason that he had obtained the assurance of the goddess of learning herself to the effect that he would never suffer any defeat in controversy. Keshab Bhatta had discovered that all the *Shāstras* appeared on the tip of his tongue without any effort on his part by the grace of the goddess of learning, and the questions, that constantly suggested themselves to him, were such that no antagonist was ever in a position to offer any satisfactory reply. His questions alone were sufficient to silence his adversary, and it never came to a discussion at all.

When the fame of Nabadwip reached his ears he hastened thither in great state, escorted by a numerous retinue mounted on richly caparisoned horses and elephants, defeating in controversial encounters all those Pandits who met his challenge on the way. His arrival at Nabadwip caused a great fear to fall upon the community of the Pandits who took counsel together apprehending the imminent loss of the prestige which they enjoyed in the learned world if this 'Conqueror of all quarters' from afar succeeded in carrying off the laurels of victory by defeating them in their very

stronghold. They were unnerved by fear at the prospect of contending with one whom Saraswati herself had been pleased to grant the boon of invincibility in controversy. All the leading Bhāttāchāryyas of Nabadwip left off all work and racked their brains over their impending discomfiture.

On every side the ominous cry was loudly expressed that the occasion had arrived which was to settle what gift of intellect the Pandits of Nabadwip really possessed. The students soon carried the tidings to Gaurāṅga. 'A certain Conqueror of the quarters (*digbijayi*), having won the favour of Saraswati, is touring all places and vanquishing in controversy all Pandits. He has in his possession the certificates of his victories from all the vanquished. He has a large following of horses, elephants, litters, attendants. He has recently arrived in the town and is actually settled in Nabadwip. He wants to engage in controversy any rival who may offer himself. If no antagonist is prepared to take up his challenge he demands that every learned association must forthwith supply him with written confession of their defeat.'

On hearing this the Lord laughingly told the truth to His pupils. 'Listen to Me, brothers. I am telling you the real truth. The Supreme Lord in no way tolerates self-conceit. The Lord always takes away whatsoever intoxicates a person to indulge in excessive vanity. Humility is the constant nature of the fruit-bearing tree as of a person endowed with all good qualities. Have you not heard of the fate of all the mightiest Conquerors of old such as Haihai, Nahusha, Bena, Bāna, Naraka, Rāvana? Was there ever any person whose vanity was not brought low? Godhead never tolerates excessive conceit. For this reason I assure you that all the pride of his learning will be completely humbled at this very place'.

Having said so, the Lord came on to the bank of the Ganges in the evening with His disciples and, having touched with reverence the holy water of the Ganges and made His obeisance to the sacred stream, Divine Gaurāṅga assumed His Seat in the centre of His pupils. The students sat round Him in many different groups, and a brisk and cheerful discussion went forward regarding many a topic on *dharma* and the *Shāstras*. As the Lord was seated in

this joyous manner He thought of a plan of conquering 'the Conqueror of all quarters'. He did not like the idea of defeating him in open controversy in a public assembly, as such defeat would kill outright the Brāhmaṇa who was so much puffed up with inordinate vanity by reason of his victories which had filled him with the notion that he had no equal in the whole world. Moreover such defeat would also expose him to the jeers and violence of the populace who would fall upon him and plunder his belongings. If the Brāhmaṇa were vanquished in a private encounter he would be cured of his vanity without suffering the terrible pain of a public exposure. While the Lord was maturing His plan 'the Conqueror of all quarters' himself came to the very spot that evening.

What ensued after the arrival of 'the Conqueror of all quarters,' has been graphically described in all its bearings by Thākur Brindāvandās. The night was most beautifully illuminated by the gorgeous splendours of the clear Moon of Bengal. The Bhāgirathi wore her most hallowed aspect of indescribable glory. The Supreme Lord, Whose Beauty captivates the hearts of everything, was Himself Present with all His disciples. The charming Face of the Lord was constantly lit up with a Gracious Smile and His Two Beautiful Eyes wore the Eternal Look of Divine Benediction. His Fine Teeth, set between His Ruddy Lips, scorned the beauty of pearls. His Whole Frame was most delicately soft and overflowed with kindness. His Beautiful Head wore a profusion of the most charming curls of the Finest Hair. His Neck was posed like the Lion's. His Shoulders were broad as that of the elephant. His Attire was in keeping with His Figure. The Holy Form was of the most generous dimensions, with a most Beautiful Bosom which was encircled by Sree Anantadeva in the Form of the sacrificial thread. His Fine Forehead was marked with the long beautiful *tilaka* pointing upwards. His Exquisite Hands reached to the Knee. The Lord wore His Cloth in the style of the *yoga-patta* and, being Seated with His Right Foot placed in the loop of the Left Thigh, was engaged in expounding the *Shāstras*, establishing the contraries of all negative and positive conclusions. All His disciples were seated in many a group, on different sides of Him, and formed a most picturesque Assembly.

'The Conqueror of all quarters' was much surprised on beholding this wonderful Sight and thought within himself, 'Is *This* perhaps Nīmāi Pandit?' and, stopping unnoticed, gazed on the Beauty of the Lord without taking off his eyes for a long time. He then enquired of one of the disciples, 'What is His Name?' and was told in reply, 'He is, indeed, the Great Nīmāi Pandit Himself'. Thereupon, making his obeisance to the Ganges, 'the Conqueror' made his way into the midst of the Assembly of the Lord. A Slight Smile played round the Lips of the Lord as He welcomed him with cordiality, inviting him to take his seat.

'The Conqueror of all quarters' was of a most fearless disposition. But nevertheless he experienced a feeling of great awe at the Sight of the Lord. The Lord, after exchanging a few words with the Brāhmaṇa, began to be inquisitive in His Joyous Mood. He began by observing 'that the poetic powers of 'the Conqueror' were boundless and there was no subject to which he could not apply his powers with success. That they would all be delivered from their sins if he would favour them with a poetic account of the glories of the holy Ganges.' On hearing these words of the Lord 'the Conqueror' began immediately the praise of the Ganges in verses composed on the spot and with such facility and in such varied figures that his recitation appeared to possess the amplitude and dignity of the voice of the clouds. Saraswati herself was present on the tongue of 'the Conqueror,' and, therefore, whatever he said was perfect in every way.

No human being possessed the power of impeaching the same or even comprehending the full extent of the profound learning that marked his utterances. All the students of the Lord, who were counted by thousands, were astonished by listening to the description. 'Rāma, Rāma,' they ejaculated, 'It is most wonderful! Can such words come from any mortal?' The description was most richly laden in every part with all the rhetorical embellishments conceivable for adorning the human speech, that are to be found in the whole world, and to such supreme perfection that even those, who were deeply versed in all branches of the *Śāstras*, found it most difficult even to follow him. In this fashion 'the

Conqueror' spoke on for the space of a quarter of the night and did not yet finish.

When 'the Conqueror' at last ceased Sree Gaursundar said laughingly 'that the real purpose of the words, woven into the verses by him, was not intelligible to them unless he himself was pleased to explain. He would, therefore, request 'the Conqueror' to supply the explanation of his own words which were undoubtedly perfect in their import.' These sweet Words of the Lord induced 'the Conqueror' to an attempt to explain his own verses. But no sooner did he begin to expound the Lord began to criticize at every step. The Lord said in effect 'that the words that had been employed by 'the Conqueror' apparently transgressed against all the established principles of the *Shāstras* and that it was, therefore, necessary to know any other special purpose which 'the Conqueror' had in view in using them.'

The great 'Conqueror of all quarters,' the pet child of the goddess of learning, the victor of a hundred controversies, was powerless to offer any explanation, and all his intelligence seemed to desert him at this crisis. The Brāhmaṇa began to talk at random, but could establish nothing; and Sree Gaurāṅga was most prompt in pointing out all the defects of his arguments. All the genius of 'the Conqueror' forsook him and he did not understand what he himself had said. Then the Lord asked Him not to mind it but give them something fresh. But 'the Conqueror' found that he no longer possessed his former power of *impromptu* composition.

When 'the Conqueror of all quarters' was in the throes of the agony of his decisive defeat the pupils of the Lord made a gesture of laughter at his expense. But the Lord forbade all incivility and spoke kindly to the Brāhmaṇa. 'The Conqueror' had made an exhausting effort by composing those wonderful verses and was naturally very much fatigued by his exertions. The night was far advanced. So the controversy might be postponed to the next day. Let them all part for that night with mutual good-will and 'the Conqueror' should return to his lodgings for rest without feeling discouraged'. The Lord was ever tender to His opponents in His Dealings with them. Those, whom He vanquished in con-

troversy, did not experience any sorrow. The Lord behaved in the same way towards all the Professors of Nabadwip. Although He defeated them all, He pleased them all by His Conduct after His Victory. 'Let us,' He would say, 'Go home to-day and look up our authorities so that we might be in a position to answer everything correctly to-morrow.' The Lord never broke the spirit of the vanquished. Hence all were pleased with Him. Such were the Pastimes of the Lord. It was for this reason that every one, of all those Pandits who lived at Nabadwip, was in his heart of hearts well-disposed towards the Lord.

The Lord made His way home in the company of His disciples. 'The Conqueror of all quarters' felt extremely ashamed at heart. In his distress the Brāhmaṇa thus mused within himself, 'Saraswati herself gave me this boon. I have met in controversy all those who were well-versed in Nyāya, Śāṅkhyā, Pātanjala, Mīmāṁsa, Vaiseshika and Vedānta philosophies. I found none in the whole world who could even advance a plausible view in opposition to mine. The question of their ability to defeat me was, therefore, necessarily remote. But such is the contrivance of Providence that this Brāhmaṇa, Who is merely a teacher of Vyakarana which is a subject for infants, should be able actually to defeat me! The boon of Saraswati herself would seem to be unsure! There is good cause for the greatest anxiety in this. Some offence against the goddess must have been engendered in myself and due to this the power of my genius has been lessened. I must find out the cause of it this very day.' Thinking thus the Brāhmaṇa sat down to the recitation of the *mantra* and, having finished the due quota, betook himself to his bed with a sorrowful heart. In his dream Saraswati appeared before the Bipra and, casting her merciful glance on the fortunate Brāhmaṇa, began to tell him secrets that are most carefully hidden in the Scriptures. Saraswati said, 'Listen, good Brāhmaṇa. I am going to tell you the hidden secret of the Vedas. If you disclose this to any one your life will assuredly be cut short. He, at Whose Hands you have suffered defeat, is most assuredly the Lord of the endless universe. He is, indeed, the Self-same Lord Whose Lotus Feet I ever serve. I feel ashamed of myself even to appear before

Him. My function is to delude all creatures into the vanities of the false ego. This function has no admission into the Sphere that is lighted up by the Glance of Vāsudeva. It is I who speak through your tongue. But I have no power in His Divine Presence. It is not merely my little self who feels so helpless but even the Divine Sheshadeva Himself, Who expounds the Vedas by His thousand Mouths and is the Worshipped of Aja, Bhava and all the great gods, is bewildered in the Presence of the Supreme Lord Whom you have seen face to face in the Form of the Brāhmaṇa. He is Transcendentally Great, Eternal, Pure, Indivisible, Irreducible and is Present in His Fullness in the hearts of all. From Him proceeds work, knowledge, learning, all good and evil, the visible and the invisible, in fact everything which it is not possible for me to fully recount to you. All the creatures from Brahmā downwards who are subject to suffering undergo tribulation by His Command. All the Avatāras, such as the Fish, Tortoise, etc., of Whom you have heard, are no other than He. It is the Same Lord Who restores the world in His Form of the Boar, the Same Who protects Prahlāda in His Form of Man-lion. He is the Life of Bali in His Form of Vāmana Whose Lotus Feet are the Source of the holy Ganges. It is He Who Appeared in Ajodhya and killed the wicked Rāvana by His Endless Wonderful Activities. Him we call the Son of Vasudeva and Nanda. He is at present, as the Son of Brāhmaṇa, actively engaged in the Pleasures of learning. Not even the Veda Himself is aware of His Appearance in the world. One can know Him only if He makes Himself known. Who has power to know otherwise? All the mantras, that you have recited to me up till now, are not really fulfilled by yielding as their fruit the status of 'the Conqueror of all quarters'. The real fruit of my *mantra* you have at last obtained only now, in as much as you have had a Direct Sight of the Lord of the countless worlds. Bipra, go quickly to His Feet and surrender your body to Him. Don't consider these words as an idle dream. I have divulged to you the hidden knowledge of the Vedas under the influence of the *mantra*. Saying this the goddess Saraswati disappeared and the Brāhmaṇa woke up from his sleep.

The Brāhmaṇa immediately made his way, at early dawn,

to the Presence of the Lord. The Bipra made prostrated obeisances to the Lord Who thereupon lifted him up into His Arms. The Lord asked, 'Brother, what is the meaning of this behaviour?' The Bipra made reply, 'Even so is the Merciful Glance of Thy Eyes'. The Lord asked, Being yourself 'Conqueror of all quarters' why do you behave in this way to Me? 'The Conqueror' said, 'Deign to listen, Prince of Brâhmaṇas, All work is fulfilled by serving Thee. Thou art Nârâyaṇa in the Form of the twice-born in the Kali Age. Who has power to recognise Thee? The suspicion grew in my mind the moment my power of speech deserted me as Thou questioned. Thou art declared by all the Scriptures to be the Breaker of all worldly vanity. I have truly experienced this undoubted truth. Thou overcame me three times and yet preserved my reputation. Is this possible Otherwise than by the Power of the Supreme Lord Himself? Wherefore it is most certain that Thou art Nârâyaṇa. In all the learned societies of the world, in Gauḍa, Trihut, Delhi, Kâsi, Gujrât, Vijayanagar, Kâñchipuri, Anga, Vanga, Tailanga, Odhra and other places, there is no scholar who could even understand my words, far less find fault with them. I, who am so clever, failed to establish anything in Thy Presence. Whither did all my wits depart? This Feat of Thine is not at all wonderful. The goddess of learning herself told me that Thou art her Lord. Most auspicious, indeed, was the planetary conjunction under which I let my foot at Nabadwip, that I, so sunk in the deep mire of the world, have obtained the Sight even of Thy-self. Bewitched by the wily entanglements of ignorant selfish desires I have long wandered astray, utterly deceiving myself. By good fortune I have now obtained the Sight of Thee. Be pleased to deliver me by Thy Merciful Glance. It is Thy Nature to do good to all. There is no one except Thy-self Who is the Refuge and Who is Truly Merciful. Be pleased, Great One, so to instruct me that there may never again arise any evil desire in my mind.

The 'Conqueror of all quarters', most humbled, praised the Lord in many various ways, in terms of sincere penitence. On hearing the fervent words of the Brâhmaṇa Sree Gaursundar smiled as He thus Replied, 'Listen, illustrious Brâhmaṇa. You,

on whose tongue Saraswati herself abides, are, indeed, most fortunate. The use of learning does not lie in 'conquering all quarters.' That scholarship alone is genuine which serves the Supreme Lord. Consider this well and attentively. When a person leaves his body, his wealth or any human qualifications never accompany their quondam possessor. It is for this reason that all who are pure-souled, apply themselves with a firm purpose to serve the Supreme Lord, discarding every other occupation. Therefore, Bipra, giving up all evil ways make haste to worship the Feet of Sree Kṛṣṇa without delay, and continue to serve Kṛṣṇa with firm conviction until you are overtaken by death. Know for certain that the only due fruit of learning is obtained if one's mind and work continue to abide thereby at the Lotus Feet of Sree Kṛṣṇa. I declare to you the highest advice. Devotion to Vishnu is the one thing that is true in all these countless worlds'. Having said so the Supreme Lord being pleased with the Brāhmaṇa, embraced him. Being favoured by the Embrace of the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha the twice-born was released from all his worldly fetters. The Lord said, 'Brāhmaṇa, give up all vanity. Betake to the service of Kṛṣṇa by being merciful to all beings. Whatever Saraswati might have told you, never divulge to any one else. By speaking out the Hidden Truth of the Scriptures the span of life is cut short and such a person verily suffers the bad consequences of such conduct in the next world.'

The great Brāhmaṇa, on receiving the Command of the Lord and after making many prostrated obeisances to Him and repeatedly doing homage to His Lotus Feet, departed thence, having thus obtained the highest fulfilment of all his endeavours. By the Command of the Lord that very instant devotion, want of attachment to things mundane and the true knowledge manifested themselves simultaneously in the person of that Brāhmaṇa. The vanity of being 'Conqueror of all quarters' completely disappeared. The Bipra became humbler than a blade of grass. After bestowing on fit persons the gift of every earthly possession that he had, his elephants, horses, conveyances, wealth and all equipments, that 'Conqueror of all quarters' set out on his journey companionless. Such is the Pastime of Sree Gaursundar. It is the Natural Quali-

ty of His Mercy that a person, who obtains it, betakes himself to the occupation of begging, giving up the kingly state. In this Kali Age Sree Dabirkhas bore testimony to the truth of this by preferring the retreat of the forest to a princely position. Wealth and power, which are coveted by all the world, are discarded by the servant of Kṛshna after having been gained. The state of a king and such other temporal things, are deemed pleasant only just so long as one is ignorant of the bliss of devotion. Even the pleasure of emancipation from all the miseries of the world is considered by the devotees of Kṛshna as trivial, not to speak of such happiness as accrues from the possession of kingdoms and other coveted things of this world. Nothing is of any worth except the Kind Glance of the Supreme Lord; for which reason all the Scriptures proclaim only the service of the Lord.

Thus did 'the Conqueror of all quarters' obtain his final deliverance. Such is the wonderful Career of Sree Gaursundar. The news of the Lord's Victory over 'the Conqueror' quickly spread to all parts of Nadiā. All the people were overwhelmed with astonishment and instinctively realised "that Nimāi Pandit was undoubtedly a Very Great Scholar. They had not yet heard of another scholar who could have defeated 'the Conqueror'. They confessed that Nimāi Pandit had every justification for His Pride and it was only now that the Real Greatness of His Learning was made patent to all." Some said 'if He had only read Nyāya He could have easily attained the position of Bhattāchāryya'. Some proposed 'that all the people should join together and confer on Him the title of *Vādisimha* (Lion of controversy).' These estimates, says Thākur Brindāvandās, show the triumph of His Deluding Power who prevented the people from recognising His Divinity, even after they had seen all this. Thus all over Nadiā all the people discoursed about the Achievement of the Lord. The citizens of Nabadwip are worthy of the homage of everybody inasmuch as they are privileged to witness these Activities of the Lord. Those, adds Thākur Brindāvandās, who listen to this Narration of the Victory of the Lord over 'the Conqueror of all quarters', never have any further occasion of suffering defeat in their own case. We reserve the treatment of this remark of Thākur Brindāvandās for the next chapter.

CHAPTER XVIII

SIGNIFICANCE OF SCHOLASTIC TRIUMPHS

I HAVE tried to reproduce almost verbatim the account of Sree Thākur Brindāvandās in describing the controversial triumph of Nimāi Pandit over 'the Conqueror' of all quarters. Technical details of the controversy also have been handed down to us in the Narrative of the same event in the immortal work of Sree Krishnadās Kavirāj Goswāmi. The shloka which was condemned by Sree Gaursundar runs as follows:—

*Mahatvam Gangāyāh Satatamidamāvāti nitarām
Yadesā Shree-Vishnoshcharana Kamalotpattisubhagā
Dvitiyā Shree-Lakshmirīva Suranarairarchyacharanā
Bhabāmibharturyā shirasi bibhavatyadbhutagunā.*

Sree Gaursundar pointed out in detail the defective disposition and use of words and the incorrectness of rhetorical embellishments used in the *shloka*, while admitting specific excellences. He observed that the five principal defects pointed out by Him were the most prominent ones; but there were also other and numerous minor defects. He said that the productions of the greatest poets such as Kālidās, Bhababhuti, Jayadeva, etc., were not also free from all defects; and so it was not necessary for 'the Conqueror' to be discouraged, inasmuch as he certainly possessed the poetic genius which is so rare.

The power of learning, that ever serves the Supreme Lord, does not mislead any one; but worldly learning always misleads her votaries. This is not the Age-long controversy of Theology *versus* Natural Science; as both of them are equally the products of the erring reason of man. The issue is the higher one. Is the Absolute attainable by empiric knowledge? Nimāi Pandit held the view that empiric knowledge is necessarily defective, *i.e.*, un-

true, by the standard of the Absolute. Instead of helping us to find the Truth empiric knowledge produces a delusive belief in the sufficiency of itself, and thus acts as an obstacle in the way of the search of the Truth.

All mental speculation as a matter of fact is non-spiritual by its unavoidable neglect to make due allowance for inherent limitations. It is never possible for the reason of man to discover the Absolute Truth by its unavoidably limited speculative efforts. 'The Conqueror of all quarters' was, however, aware of this. He knew, what ordinary scholars will be hardly prepared to admit, that it was the goddess of learning who was the cause of his genius. If this were fully admitted by everybody then all differences, detectable in such knowledge, would be proved to be fictitious, and be at once seen as due to the operation of an invisible controlling Power who also produces and keeps up the idea of human merit as the resultant of human effort. 'The Conqueror' was aware of the conditional nature of his knowledge. But 'the Conqueror' himself had not realised the utter delusiveness of *all* worldly learning. He accordingly aspired to the fame of being the acknowledged leading scholar of the world. The greatest theologians and the greatest scientists are but puppets in the hands of the goddess of illusion, if either of them suppose that they can know the Truth by their limited effort.

Sree Jiva Goswāmiprabhu is not a controversialist of the mundane stamp. His arguments can never be really grasped by even the greatest of empiric thinkers of this world. Sree Jiva Goswāmi refutes his antagonists by arguments that are intelligible to empiricists for overthrowing the conclusions of a faulty system. He, however, knew that he was actually the channel of communication of the one Living Indivisible Knowledge to all impartial understandings in the Form of the Articulated Transcendental Sound. Sree Jiva Goswāmi's sole ambition was to serve as the unobstructive medium of the Divine Communication. He is, as a matter of fact, not in the scale of comparison with the empiric scholars of this world. All comparison between one empiric scholar and another is mundane and delusive. The futile speculation of one man is by its nature challengeable by the equally abortive rival

speculation of another man. This opens the way to the vicious cycle of the endless and inconclusive controversy that passes in the name of theology. All this controversy is untrue and never takes us an inch in the direction of the Truth. In the picturesque language of Srimad Bhagavatam it is futile to expect the discovery of the grain by thrashing the empty chaff. Empiric knowledge has not legs to stand upon. It rests on unproved and unprovable assumptions. It assumes the principle of limitation itself as the basis of its search for the Unlimited! Can there be conceived a greater or more absurd form of self-deception than this?

'The Conqueror' was the favoured protege of the goddess of the delusive empiric learning. All the empiric sciences accordingly yielded up their whole wealth (?) of hypothetical truths (?) to him, without any acquisitive effort on his part. The ideal of the empiric quest is the unrealisable wild-goose of the fable. Let us suppose that it is possible for one to know everything that it is possible or desirable for one to know and whenever one is in actual need of such knowledge. Will the possession of such power yield, or produce in such a person the inclination for, the Absolute Truth? If I could attain every facility that is conceivable to the human reason as desirable possession without any effort, would it be the really satisfactory state of existence that it is conceived to be? This was the actual condition of 'the Conqueror of all quarters.' But he felt as solitary as Faust himself 'in his bad eminence'. But there is no Tempter except one's own boundless vanity of the hankering for empiric knowledge. The attempt to shift the responsibility of our sins to the shoulders of a third party, is most disengenuous since it is so easy to explain our own responsibility for our sins without the profanity of any such deliberately dishonest assumptions.

The paltry reason of man, when it takes upon itself to shape its own course, finds itself reaping the harvest of its deliberate folly. It could foresee well enough the inevitable consequences of its attempt to dominate the world, if it could only properly exercise the sense of its responsibility for its acts, which it undoubtedly possesses. The exercise of the egotistic principle, on the part of a being with limited faculties of knowledge, is bound to lead to

discord and misery. The plea is sometimes advanced that the miseries of this world are unreal. They do not really affect those who possess sufficient firmness of disposition. This is the Stoic's philosophy. But it is the most fatal form of all delusions. It is hardly prepared to deny the reality of misery in the case of those who do not possess the required imaginary firmness of disposition. It finds itself occupied in applauding the qualities of the unfeeling stone and the hardened criminal. This mechanical 'unconcern' is not capable of being recognised even by the limited intellect as the ideal of human perfection. The miseries of this world are not really ended by such suicidal policy. It is necessary to seek out the true cause of our miseries for effecting their real and lasting cure. Empiric science is, at any rate, free from the killing vice of callousness of the Stoics. Its defect is not that it at all undertakes to search for the Truth; but that it deliberately undertakes to do this in the evidently wrong way. The empiric optimist is, however, nevertheless cousin-german of the empiric pessimist. The *forte* of both is an egregious egotism which both of them mistake for the principle of their coveted individuality and personality and for which they heroically prepare themselves to take all fictitious risks. This is no doubt rank atheism. Who is the antagonist against whom all this preparation is directed. There is no Satan in this world except one's own avoidable egoistic vanity.

'The Conqueror of all quarters' was happily dis-illusioned and gave up all worldly ambition, to follow the true spiritual path. It is necessary to consider the means by which such a result was produced, as also the nature of the change itself. This great change was wrought by the Mercy of Sree Gaursundar. The goddess of learning directed 'the Conqueror' to the Feet of Nimāi Pandit. The same goddess was thus performing a double and apparently contradictory function. She had herself hitherto produced the delusion from which she now chose to rescue her victim. For the previous sufferings of 'the Conqueror' the goddess was not to blame at all. She is ever contriving to save the perverse soul from the consequences of his suicidal folly, without allowing him to succeed in actually destroying himself. Her function is like

that of the wise mother who deludes her wayward child with toys that have no intrinsic worth in order to wean the naughty child from the consequences, present and prospective, of his wantonness. The culpable egotistic sentiment is inherent in free cognition and is controllable only by the conviction of its possessor that it is wrong. This is at once the privilege and the danger of the soul of man poised between the spiritual and mundane worlds. The *jiva* possesses as his birthright perfect freedom to abuse his cognitive liberty. The empiric sciences of this world provide the scope for the abuse of his liberty. The sciences themselves are not to blame for this. As a matter of fact they are never created by, but are only communicated to, the mind of man. 'The Conqueror' had realised this truth. Modern scientists, as a rule, do not admit this. Nor do they admit its corollary that the empiric sciences only serve to conceal the Truth more effectively. This last fact was also unknown to 'the Conqueror'. But inasmuch as he was fortunately immune from the more fatal of the above two defects, he proved to be of a more governable disposition. Mother Saraswathi accordingly directed him to the Lord Who alone could deliver him from his ignorance. It is only by the positive Appearance of the Truth that untruth loses its power over us.

The Supreme Lord is the Sole Director of all the power of learning. We want our so-called acquired learning to serve our own selfish purposes, and not for serving the purpose of the Lord. But learning refuses to serve any one except the Lord. When she seems to serve us she only puts on a deceptive appearance, in order to delude us for our benefit, by the Will of the Lord. This deception is continued as long as we retain the least inclination to be her master. As a matter of fact we can never be her master. We serve her even when she seems to serve us although this is contrived by her with such consummate skill that we find ample scope for serving her purpose even by our vanity of being her master. It is our own irrational attitude that is solely responsible for the deception, that is thus provided by the Mercy of the Supreme Lord for our redemption.

The goddess of learning ever serves the Supreme Lord and she serves only Him. This is inconceivable to our limited under-

standing. 'We are ever striving to learn the so-called deluding secrets of Nature. Such striving would be meaningless if we did not expect to be rewarded with success in the shape of the attainment of material results yielding worldly facilities. The power to be able to compose impromptu verses is one of such facilities. The verses actually composed by 'the Conqueror' were in praise of the holy Ganges; and such performance might, therefore, appear to have been of a spiritual nature. But 'the Conqueror' was praising the Ganges only in order to win fame for himself. Every learned activity of empiric reason necessarily aims at some such definite selfish result. Empiric learning has its face always and necessarily directed towards the selfish interests of its ignorant victim.

The so-called disinterested pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, so loudly advertised by the empiric pedants, is a misnomer as applied to the inductive and deductive processes of the mental principle professing to engage itself in unravelling the so-called mysteries of the mundane world. It is not at all disinterested. Behind it all lies the insincere conviction that knowledge will bring power to its possessor. It is the possession and enjoyment of power over Nature that can be the only logical goal of all worldly learning. However proud we may be of this learning it is permissible to question the conclusion that it has *any* real use for us. Is not the whole affair an example of repeating a foolish experiment even after its exposure? We are apt to assume that our knowledge is the cause of the so-called progress of mundane civilisation. We are punished and dis-illusioned by the ever-present possibility of the wheels of this worldly civilisation irrevocably going back at any moment. If knowledge has to be kept up to the teaching of experience by the process of its constant revision, is it not thereby proved to be always really inapplicable to any event? If what we are pleased, on insufficient grounds, to call the *cause* of an event, turns out to be no such thing, can we blame anybody excepting ourselves for neglecting this foregone conclusion?

The laws of Mathematics, we say, have proved perfectly reliable ever since the dawn of human civilisation, and are accordingly inferred to be absolutely true; and it is also expected that they

will remain true for all time. There are certain so-called fundamental principles which are also supposed to be true. All this is, on the face of it, self-contradictory. What then is the real value of this experience? The whole position is entirely relative to the nature of our present senses and shares all their defects. The senses do not give us the correct information. Our unbiased reason tells us that they cannot also give us the true information, as the temporary have no capacity of apprehending the Absolute Reality. The knowledge, that our senses yield, is one of the changing phenomena of this world. It cannot understand itself.

If it were possible to know the Truth would we still have the temporary use of our empiric knowledge? 'The Conqueror'. at any rate, gave up once for all any further acquisitive effort. He must have realised the utter uselessness of such knowledge. We learn that he lived to write theological works that have come down to us embodying his reasons for forsaking the empiric quest. So his activities did not stop altogether. But a race of theological writers and priests by themselves do not supply the ideal state of worldly existence. The world is sufficiently bad as it is. But it would be worse by such a change for the reason that even material civilisation is preferable to fanatical barbarism. But are we absolutely sure that material civilisation or material barbarism is producible by the effort of the will of man? The philosophical answer should be in the negative.

But if we change the form of the question and ask 'Is the knowledge of the Absolute Truth attainable by man?' we at once find the right track. 'The Conqueror' was evidently satisfied that it is possible to know the Truth. Our responsibility in the matter is very great indeed. If the Truth is knowable we cannot be excused if we deliberately neglect to find Him. It is said that the Truth is to be found in the Scriptures. This is denied by the Upanishads which declare that there are two kinds of learning or knowledge, *viz.*, (1) the transcendental knowledge, and (2) knowledge that is not so. The Vedas and all branches of study are classed as the text books of non-transcendental learning. The transcendental learning is declared to be that by which the Transcendental Truth is known. The Bhāgavatam declares that if a

person, who is thoroughly versed in the Scriptures, be not conversant with the transcendental, then his efforts in the acquisition and preservation of such learning have no more value than the labour that is wasted in tending a dry cow. A distinction is made between the phenomenal and the transcendental. Learning as such, whether in the form of Theology or otherwise, is lumped together as non-transcendental. The knowledge of the Scriptures is not differentiated from that of any other branch of study. Neither is non-transcendental knowledge condemned. It is declared that non-transcendental knowledge is subordinate to the transcendental and that the possession of the transcendental knowledge automatically and perfectly settles our relation to non-transcendental knowledge and teaches us the proper use of empiric knowledge. We need not be haunted with the impertinent fears of a conspiracy for the suppression or preservation of material civilisation. The question at issue does not affect our material prospects which are quite safe in the hands of Providence. But the method to be pursued seriously concerns the prospects of the individual soul for regaining his natural spiritual condition.

Transcendental Knowledge cannot be acquired by the inductive or deductive empiric processes. The first step that is to be taken in the direction of the attainment of such knowledge, is to try to be convinced of the necessity of submitting to receive Him at the Hands of the Supreme Lord. Godhead Himself is the Absolute Knowledge. He alone can make Himself known to us. He is Free in His Choice to make Himself known to us. We also may or may not want to know Him. We do not really want to know Him so long as we do not want to serve Him. The Supreme Lord may be known only by the method of complete submission. Perfect submission is an indispensable condition of the attainment of such knowledge. The necessity and nature of complete submission is not conceivable except by the Mercy of the Lord. The Lord is spontaneously All-merciful. We come under the Influence of His Mercy the moment we are at all really *inclined* to submit to Him. This inclination is sometimes produced by the shock of utter worldly humiliation. It was so in the case of 'the Conqueror'. It came to him as the consequence of his defeat in controversy by the Lord.

The Mercy of the Supreme Lord often comes in the shape of defeat and humiliation. No one except the actual recipient of the Divine Favour can perceive His Appearance. We gather all this from the writings of Keshab Bhatta himself who was favoured by the Supreme Lord.

The goddess of learning ever serves her Lord. She directs the erring empiric scholar to the Real Knowledge when he is at all inclined to serve the Truth. The endless experiments with the finite, that now-a-days absorb all intellectual efforts of man, are not undertaken for the purpose of finding the Truth. Very few of those who busy themselves with the acquisition of worldly learning and fewer still of those who attain fame and success(?) in such pursuit, attain to the inclination to suspect the utter worthlessness of empiric scholarship in itself. They seldom seriously put the question to themselves, 'What shall we do with this deluding and changing knowledge?' Most people take it for granted that empiric knowledge is desirable because it is valued by all people of this world. It is supposed to increase our chances of happiness (?) It is only those, who do not feel *sufficiently* satisfied by the prospect, who ask the further question, 'What is the value of the proposed happiness itself'?

It is in this last form that the call for the quest of the Absolute makes its first appearance to the individual consciousness. So long as the lure of worldly prospects continue to dominate the mind one can hardly be expected to pay any serious attention to the voice of the higher reason that is always speaking to everybody from within. It is only when a person actually shapes his external conduct in conformity with such prompting that he is in a position to obtain the realised Mercy of the Supreme Lord. Vanity in all its forms stands in the way of our real conversion to the free spiritual service of the Absolute.

Sree Gaursundar showed His Extraordinary Mercy to 'the Conqueror of all quarters' by defeating him in controversy in such a way that the vanquished was enabled to realise, for the first time in his life, his own utter helplessness in the Presence of a mere Boy Who taught nothing higher than Vyākaraṇa. This proved to be an exceptionally favourable spiritual conjunction for 'the

'Conqueror' who was actually enabled to realise its supreme significance for himself by the grace of the goddess of learning whom he had worshipped so long for a vain purpose.

It is likely that really great scholars may be in a slightly better position than others to be able to realise the utter worthlessness of all empiric scholarly achievements. But it is rarely that this saving truth is rightly grasped and acted upon by any one in this world of his own accord. The spiritual instinct, the effective hankering for the un-alloyed Truth, is not the result of any worldly merit or demerit. But as soon as the first dim reflection of the light of Truth begins to irradiate the dark chambers of the mind, it automatically drives out the desire of all worldly possession. The mind realises that the Truth has made His Appearance, not as the result of the intensity of its professed quest for the Truth of Whom it had no idea previously, but in spite of its bungling activity calculated to shut Him out altogether.

The process of spiritual enlightenment is not of the nature of the last term of a continued mathematical series, neither does it result in the destruction of all previous experience. It should rather be regarded as the fulfilment of all previous activities. With the Appearance of the Absolute, however, there is an end of all deficiency, unwholesomeness and ignorance. We now know the Full Truth, and, in this sense, enlightenment is its own fulfilment. It also dis-illusionises. The whole body of the old knowledge is seen to be utterly unsubstantial and positively delusive. The shadow had all along been mistaken for the substance. The nature of the shadow is truly realisable only after one's acquaintance with the substance. There is then no more chance of the shadow being mistaken for the substance.

It is no doubt a rude shock to be awakened in this manner. 'The Conqueror' confessed that the first suspicion that he had of the actual Approach of the Truth, was caused by his absolute collapse at the very Sight of the Lord. The darkness, which had been so fondly cherished, was found powerless to oppose the Advent of the Living Light. The first experience of the transcendental requires to be carefully distinguished from the invasion of hallucination. The transcendental is not anything that is opposed

to the laws of physical Nature. It is not any thing abnormal. It is not a monstrosity. It neither confounds nor stupefies, but enlightens. It does not destroy anything except ignorance. We understand for the first time the real meaning of all those things with which we had been already familiar. All this happens without any initiative on one's part and by the mere Sight of the Truth Who is no other than the Divine Person Himself.

The goddess of learning told 'the Conqueror' that he had at last gained the real reward of his devotion to her by obtaining the Sight of the Lord. But, as a matter of fact, Sree Gaurasundar was being actually seen by all the people of Nadiā, who failed to experience any such spiritual consequences. There is a difference between worldly seeing and spiritual seeing. The term 'seeing' has to be used to express the new process in order to make the fact at all intelligible to the ignorant people of the world. But spiritual seeing is very different from although certainly analogous to the process of worldly seeing. In the former the Object to be seen takes the initiative, while in the latter the initiative seems to lie with the person who sees. That, which we seem to see on our own initiative, is the shadow. In such seeing we approach only such objects that are bound to show themselves to us the moment we choose to look at them. The object has no option but to be seen. Nay, it is bound to submit itself to the inspection of our senses as soon as we are in a position to choose to inspect. This process of knowing applies only to matter, limited existence or the shadow. The substantive Reality is spiritual and possesses the initiative.

Why do we never see the soul of man? Because we are content with the sight of the material case which seems readily enough to submit to our sensuous inspection. The material eye sees, can see, only matter. The soul does not see matter as substance. He is not under the necessity of curtailing or distorting his naturally perfect vision. One is no loser if his faculty of vision ceases to be eclipsable by the interposition of an opaque body. The soul sees, through all obstacles, the object. He sees the obstacle as the enveloping shadow of the substance. There is thus no loss of cognitive power by the spiritual process.

The soul, in his normal state of un-eclipsed spiritual condition, is privileged to have the sight of the reality. This privilege he forfeits the moment he begins to function in this material world. His faculty of vision is eclipsed, as he now sees through the coloured glasses of the material eyes, which function is on the level of the plane of this world. But he is no gainer by the change as his knowledge of his own self is also correspondingly obscured. The conditioned soul functions in this world by allowing himself to be personated by a material substance which he is compelled to mistake for himself. But his adventitious second self is not really his servant, but always behaves as his master and makes him undergo in proxy the disappointments of his unnatural identification with its unsubstantial existence. It is no privilege or widening of existence for the substance to be reduced to the serfdom of a shadow.

The All-soul is never subject to any such obscuration. It is only the *jīva* soul, who is a detachable particle of the Potency of the All-soul, who is liable to succumb to His limiting Power. 'The Conqueror' had the spiritual vision of the Lord. The people of Nadiā also saw the Lord but with their material eyes and necessarily as an entity of this world. But 'the Conqueror', no sooner did he see the Lord, then he believed Him to be more than human. In fact the Lord made Himself *known* to Him at the very first sight. No one can recognise the Lord unless He makes Himself known. This applies to all spiritual entities. They have an unstinted sight of one another in the Lord so long as they serve the Lord by the boundless measure of the perennial requirements of such service. The Lord strictly reserves the right of remaining unrecognised by all till He chooses to make Himself known to any one out of His own causeless mercy.

As soon as the Lord permitted 'the Conqueror of all quarters' to have the real Sight of Himself all the learning of which he supposed himself to have been the master, came forward in the living form of the Spiritual Power that ever serves the Lord, and made Herself known to him as She really is. The goddess of learning is that Power whereby the Lord makes Himself known to the cognitive faculty of the *jīva*. She is part and parcel of the Divinity Himself. But she is not Herself the Master. 'She is

Power and not Possessor of Power. She is, however, Power with Personality and Function under the Supreme and Exclusive Direction of the Divine Will. In this She resembles souls in the state of Grace. 'The Conqueror' had been unable to know Her Real Nature as long as he had been trying to make use of Her for purposes other than the service of the Lord. But when the Lord was pleased to be merciful to 'the Conqueror' the goddess, by the Will of the Lord, instead of misleading now, made known to 'the Conqueror' the Real Nature of the Lord, which is, indeed, the legitimate function of all learning. 'The Conqueror', who had supposed that he was master of all the *Shāstric* learning, now discovered that he had misunderstood everything. He also realised the fact that no one can know the Lord by one's own aspiring efforts.

The Goddess directed Her votary to make his unconditional submission to the Lord without delay. When the Lord asked him why he, 'the Conqueror of all quarters', had chosen to submit to Him, Keshab Bhatta replied that everything is fulfilled by serving the Lord. The spiritual service of the Lord, resting upon the principle of complete submission, is the *summum bonum*. This is realised only by the causeless Mercy of the Lord as conditioned souls are naturally disinclined to unconditional submission to another's personality. This was also the stumbling block in the way of the scholars of Nabadwip. They did not believe in the Personality of the Lord. But unless the Lord is a Person how is it possible to serve Him at all? The Lord, of course, is not a person like conditioned souls. The empiric idea of personality is that of a limited and erring mind joined to a gross physical body. It is not, therefore, at all surprising that there should be a sincere and universal repugnance, on the part of empiric thinkers, to admit such personality in the case of the Supreme Lord. But the Personality of the Lord and of His servants are neither material nor mental. Therefore the objection does not apply.

The Goddess of Learning did not also direct 'the Conqueror' to submit to an abstract principle, which would be a fraud. The so-called submission to an abstract principle is rendered to a variable concoction of one's own erring mind. When we pretend

to submit to an abstract divinity (?) we thereby only make a show of submitting to our own pedantic phantasies. As a matter of fact we are disinclined to submit to a real person as such submission appears to us to be incompatible with a free rational individual existence.

So submission to the Supreme Person is equivalent neither to submission to an abstraction nor to a conditioned soul. The Personality of the Supreme Lord is such that by submitting to Him we are delivered from the necessity of following the indeterminate abstract concoctions of our own sensuous minds and the similar fancies of others. We have in this world no choice but to submit to one of these two alternatives and we choose to call the process by the epithets of liberty (?) and rationalism (?) against the elementary principles of our own logic. Actual unconditional submission to the Transcendental Personality of the Supreme Lord is the only cure of this misfortune to which we are thus necessarily subject in the conditioned state.

Keshab Bhatta admitted that the Personality of the Lord is inconceivable to the empiric reason and is the Truth of all the Scriptures. Those empiric philosophical systems, which try to establish the Nature of Godhead by the process of inductive reasoning based on the experience of this world, can really arrive at no definite conclusion. Keshab Bhatta realised that he had known *nothing* by his so-called erudition, and that it was not possible for him to know the Truth except by the Mercy of the Lord. He also realised that he was now enabled to understand, against the conclusions of all empiric philosophy, that the Son of Sree Jagannāth Misra is the Supreme Lord, that his own past profession of submission to the Supreme Lord had been a terrible self-deception, that it was only now that he was privileged to obtain the chance of really submitting to the Supreme Lord Himself in the Person of Sree Gaursundar, that such submission was at once the cause and the result, the indispensable concomitant, of spiritual enlightenment by the Grace of the Lord.

The episode of the defeat and conversion of 'the Conqueror' is the first recorded instance of the deliverance of a conditioned soul by the Mercy of Sree Gaursundar. We would, therefore,

be well advised if we try to consider carefully how this Mercy was obtained. The process has been described above in detail by the grace of Thākur Brindāvandās. We have seen that the Mercy of the Lord was not earned by any worldly merit. It was altogether causeless. We can, therefore, obtain some sort of the idea of its nature by the careful consideration of this actual instance. Does such knowledge help us in any way in attaining the spiritual life? It does so negatively, by destroying current misconceptions on the subject, if we give the Narrative an impartial hearing and thus prepare our minds for receiving the Truth when He actually makes His Appearance in the *person* of the devotee of the Supreme Lord, who teaches us the Truth by his own conduct. We can, however, understand the words of the *bona fide* devotee by the method of *personal* submission to him. Sree Gaurasundar is the Supreme Lord Himself. He appeared in this world in the character of His devotee in order to establish the necessity of submission to the servant of the Lord if one really wants to obtain spiritual enlightenment. The episode of 'the Conqueror of all quarters' will have, therefore, served its real purpose if it establishes to one's satisfaction the necessity of this procedure to be followed even by those who are supposed to be masters (?) of all the knowledge of this world.

But how is it possible to recognise the transcendental personality of the devotees of the Lord? This, of course, depends entirely on the Mercy of the Lord Himself, which can be secured by serving the Goddess of Learning not with the object of gaining any worldly advantage but for the purpose of receiving *spiritual* enlightenment. In the case of 'the Conqueror' he had all along been using his learning to procure reputation and wealth. He was now disillusioned by the causeless Mercy of Sree Gaurasundar. The devotees of the Lord are ever engaged in endeavouring to reclaim all conditioned souls from the state of bondage to the limiting Energy. The bondage is devised by the punitive Power of the Lord, who is the negative aspect of His Beneficent Power. The devotees of the Lord are the agents of Positive Beneficence of Divine Power, appearing in this world to deliver all bound souls by affording them an opportunity of actual submission to the

agents of the Lord, *i.e.*, to themselves. The bound *jīva* is seldom inclined to submit to any *person* other than himself. The inclination to submit to a devotee may be produced by attending carefully to the Narrative of the Activities of Sree Gaursundar as interpreted by His associates and followers for the benefit of all conditioned souls.

It was only after he had submitted to the Feet of the Lord that 'the Conqueror' attained the spiritual life. He became a devotee of the Lord. 'The Conqueror of all quarters' was freed from his accumulated ignorance and at last became really learned by learning the service of the Lord.

Keshab Bhatta belonged originally to the school of Nimbārkāchāryya and is the author of '*Kramadeepikā*' in which work he lays down the principles of the service of Sree Sree Rādhakrishna in conformity with the Teachings of Sree Gaursundar and the verses of the '*Dasa-Sloki*' of Nimbārkāchāryya. He was followed by Gāngalya Bhatta and other disciples. At a subsequent period, Keshab Kashmiri, who is not to be confounded with Keshab Bhatta, and others gave up the path of Sree Gaursundar and established an independent school. But Sree Sanātana Goswāmi and Sree Gopāla Bhatta Goswāmi, in recognition of the fact that Keshab Bhatta was enlightened by Sree Gaursundar, have collected material for the Vaishnavite canon from his work, the '*Krama-deepikā*' referred to above.

As the result of the Mercy of Sree Gaursundar, Keshab Bhatta was enabled, by the operation of the Spiritual Power of the Divinity, to be simultaneously endowed with all excellences in the shape of devotion to the Lord, realisation of the Divine Nature, and aversion to anything other than the Lord. Keshab Bhatta now became humbler than a blade of grass, discarding for good all the vanities of 'the Conqueror of all quarters'.

The followers of Sree Gaursundar adopt the conduct that is prescribed by the Scriptures for the truly enlightened *viz.*, the genuine Brāhmaṇas. They give up all military, economic, or other worldly ambitions, and, in fact, all hankering for fame and honour, accepting thereby in their hearts the ideal of the Tridandi

Bhikshu. This conduct should not also be misunderstood. The achievements of this world also appear in their true perspective to one only after he realises his own spiritual nature. They cease to have any direct attraction for such a person who gets disentangled from the progress or decay of material civilisation. He is freed from the influence of the hopes and fears of this world. But he is constantly engaged in serving the Lord by means of those very entities on the transcendental plane. The attitude is everything and is spiritual. The external conduct of the devotee is not properly intelligible to worldly people as it is not directed to any worldly object for any purpose that is intelligible to worldly people. The conduct of the devotee, however, is neither sentimental nor visionary, but part and parcel of the Eternal Reality Himself.

Those, who imagine the pursuit of sensuous enjoyment to be the sole object of life, naturally regard the dedication of learning, health, wealth and other qualifications for the augmentation of such enjoyment as their legitimate and successful use. But the insignificance and ephemeral character of the result achieved is clearly demonstrated by the phenomenon of death. Death snatches its victim from the scene of his enjoyment and shifts him to an unknown and un-knowable destination. As soon as one is enlightened in regard to the real nature of his self he is enabled to realise the triviality of his so-called happiness and possessions of this world. Such a person is privileged to understand the unwholesomeness of all worldly knowledge and activities as a help for such enjoyment. One is enabled to realise the self and his proper relationship with the ephemeral objects of this world by the Mercy of the Supreme Lord. On the appearance of self-knowledge one automatically understands the nature of the transcendental service of the Lord as being the only proper function of the soul. From this moment he is enabled to be constantly engaged in such service and to dedicate his learning, health and wealth and every other qualification to this purpose.

It is not the duty of the soul either to be addicted to the things of this world or to renounce them altogether, as both courses lead nowhere. The duty of the soul is to try and find out the

everlasting plane and to learn to function on that plane by giving up the fleeting prospects of the Epicurean and Stoic alike. Such course is the only one that exactly suits the requirements of the soul. The soul can be satisfied with nothing less than the immutable reality. The fact, which the soul in the state of bondage does not realise, is that the immutable reality is not to be found by the pursuit of fleeting worldly enjoyment, nor by simply abstaining from such pursuits. There is a third and the real method *vis.*, that of service of Godhead.

The nature of this service has to be learnt from those who are themselves well-established on the spiritual plane. It can be learnt by all persons who are sincerely desirous of knowing it and are prepared to give a really patient hearing to the exposition of methods and duties constituting the mode of endeavour for such enlightenment. This attitude is not possible in one who is not convinced of the unsatisfactory character of the correlated methods of enjoyment and renunciation of the things of this world, that are consciously or unconsciously followed by all conditioned souls including the pseudo-religionists. Only one, who is thoroughly sincere, will be disposed to accept the method that is laid down in the spiritual Scriptures and all that such a method necessarily implies.

When the spiritual plane is actually attained one is in a position to realise for himself, in a clear and conscious manner, the true nature of the cosmic and super-cosmic processes and his own place and function in the whole scheme of the Universe. The realisation of this should be possible in this life if one is prepared loyally to undergo the necessary training. It cannot of course be equally easy of attainment for all. There are very few persons who are fully prepared to accept the Truth on His Own terms. On those who are really so prepared the communication of the Truth acts with wonderful suddenness, because they really offer no resistance to His Entry into their hearts. But most of us are not really prepared to welcome the Truth even when we profess to cherish Him. This is the condition of the average honest person of this world. It is claimed in these pages that such persons are sure to benefit by listening patiently to the exposition of the Career of Sree Gaursundar from the lips of the real devotee.

They will thereby gradually acquire the effective desire for living up to the Truth. No worldly merit or demerit can either help or retard the process of spiritual enlightenment. It is situated wholly beyond the range of every form of worldly conviction and is, indeed, likely to be more easily grasped by those who are less under the sway of their formed convictions.

Those who have absolute faith in worldliness and perpetual ignorance are enamoured of the deeds of the heroes of this world. But we have also the testimony of all teachers of the Religion to the utter hollowness of all worldly achievements. A child may oppose the reconstruction of a house that is uninhabitable on the ground that the masons are plotting its destruction. But he is nevertheless necessarily wrong. Our worldly life requires to be thoroughly overhauled and reconstructed on a sounder basis. Those who are unduly attached to the rotten house by reason of either ignorance or malice, need not be regarded as wise. Empiricists are engaged in the attempt of trying to live safely and comfortably in the badly built falling house by opposing the process of imperative reconstruction. They do so partly for the avowed reason that it will be impossible to retain any measure of rottenness in the edifice after it has been thoroughly overhauled. They are right no doubt; but they are less alive to the consequences of their perversity. The policy is sure to bring the whole house down and crush them to death. There is absolutely no chance of their being able to live safely and comfortably in the rotten structure at any time.

The deceptive triumphs of material civilisation have failed to solve the old problem of the uncivilized times why everything of this world is fore-doomed to pass away. Those savages were not content with the conditions of their existence any more than we are with ours and also mainly for similar reasons. If an enchantress is pleased to provide us with an endless stock of the most beautiful things that make their appearance only to pass away, should we suppose that our requirement has been really fulfilled? It is no less necessary for us than it ever was for those savages to pause and consider well whether the achievements and convictions of material prosperity have any real value in the scale of our

absolute requirements. The quest of the Truth is not for those who are content to remain ignorant by the lure of the dissipating enjoyment of the moment.

The defect is not one of intellect, it extends to all the faculties which also have their due share in the performance of conscious activity. The self-imposed sway of empiric knowledge, which supplies no definite answer to our fundamental questionings, is responsible for all the misfortune of humanity. Empiric knowledge does not take man an inch towards the Truth. On the contrary it leads its votaries by an accelerated pace towards sin and death by its justification of the false ideal of a life of dissipation alternating with that of barren asceticism, the twin forms of egotistic worldliness. It ever whispers into the ears of man, what in his present depraved condition he seems also to like so much, that he need not depend on nor submit to any other authority than his own, that he is the master of his body and mind and through them of all things of this world which, he is assured, have been intended solely for ministering to his corrupt pleasures. These conflicting ideals of empiric knowledge require to be smashed as the first step in any plan for rescuing fallen humanity from the fell clutches of the Enchantress.

This was being done by Sree Gaursundar during the period of His Professor-life at Nabadwip and also in the subsequent period when He travelled for this sole purpose all over the country as a Sannyāsin. Those who suppose that it is against principle of humility to oppose the untruth or neglect to vindicate the Truth, are the emissaries of the Deluding Power. The attitude of humility is to be practised by all means because we cannot know the Truth by our own unaided effort. Empiric knowledge errs by ignoring this basic principle of spiritual conduct. By submitting to empiric knowledge not humility but insolence in its undiluted form is practised. Those, who are loyal servants of the Truth, are necessarily opposed to empiricism which is verily the embodiment of insolent denial of the supremacy of the Truth. Worldly people practise this masked insolence under the name of humility for deceiving themselves as well as their victims. But it should be easy to distinguish between true humility and the counterfeit

ware. The uncompromising assertion of the principle of real humility is to be found in the resolve not to tolerate any of those countless insincere shifts devised* by suicidal worldliness, under the connivance of empiric knowledge, for ruining humanity by masking them in the borrowed phraseology of Godliness.

This was admitted by 'the Conqueror of all quarters'. He was saved by being defeated in controversy by the Lord Himself. This extraordinary result would not have been produced if he had been worsted by an ordinary mortal. The process of controversy itself would have been a quite different one. 'The Conqueror' realised that his untruth had been confronted by Truth and was, therefore, utterly powerless to assert itself. He felt that he had been dabbling with words which might please and amuse but were really mere empty sounds signifying nothing. This utter hollowness of all so-called worldly knowledge is demonstrated to all sincere persons by Truth Himself in the form of the words of the devotees of Truth. On the lips of one who really serves the Absolute it is the Absolute Truth Himself Who makes His Appearance in the Form of the Divine Transcendental Sound. Divinity as Sound has Power to convey the knowledge of Himself to a soul who is prepared to receive Him as Sound against every specious obtrusive argument.

The arrogance of the devotee of the Lord is thus the perfection of true humility. Those who realise this are freed from the fetters of the Deluding Energy inasmuch as they are thereby proved to have no interest of their own as against the Truth. Those, who can be angry with the follower of Truth under any circumstance, are necessarily under the spell of empiric untruth which always differentiates the external conduct and the internal motives. But a votary of Truth is always necessarily above duplicity of this kind. This is realisable only by those who are themselves also wholly sincere.

Impertinent fears for the future of the world never disturb the devotee of the Lord nor deflect him from the constant service of the Truth. This detachment should not be confounded with idleness or indifference to duty. The alertness and industry of the 'worlding' neither help nor retard the march of events of this

world which is *wholly* controlled by a very much superior Power called in our *śāstras* 'Māyā' or the limiting Potency of Godhead acting in perfect obedience to the Will of the Supreme Lord. The empiricist, in his childish atheistical folly, chooses to imagine, against the clear impartial testimony of his own rational faculty, that he is the creator and controller of the forces of Nature. On the basis of this sacrilegious folly he builds up a science of conduct in keeping with this basic principle. It is the business of the devotee to strike at the very root of this folly in order to demolish the flimsy structure which has power to draw to itself so unaccountably the whole attention of most people of this world. There is no rational ground for doubting that a structure which is built on Truth is sure to prove a more suitable arrangement than one which is reared on untruth backed by insincerity. It is a fatal delusion, indeed, which has led rational beings to the strange conviction that they can manage to live well without Truth and that it is, therefore, their duty to oppose the Truth on the plea of possible (?) damage to the existing systems of untruth.

The devotee is sent into this world by the Lord in order to establish spiritual conduct by demonstrating the unstability of the worldly life, its prospects and achievements. It is never possible nor rationally desirable to try to build our lasting home in this world. They are mistaken who suppose that this life has to be lived for its own sake. Such people are sure to be surprised by death in the midst of their preparations for settling down in right earnest. This life is a preparation for the eternal life and should be lived accordingly. That conduct is fatal which in any way obstructs or delays the process of spiritual enlightenment. We should not allow ourselves to be diverted from the true purpose of this life by the temptations and disappointments provided by the Deluding Energy of the Lord, which are intended to help the process of our spiritual training if only they are rightly understood.

CHAPTER XIX

THAKUR HARIDĀS, BEFORE HIS MEETING WITH SREE GAURSUNDAR

It will not be out of place at this stage to introduce the great personality who is the practising teacher (*Āchāryya*) of the chanting of the Holy Name, the special Divine Dispensation for the Age of discord (Kali Yuga), the establishment of which is one of the Purposes of the Appearance of Sree Gaursundar in this world. Thākur Haridās is the eternal associate of the Supreme Lord and appears in the Company of the Lord whenever and wherever the Lord Himself chooses to make His Appearance. Thākur Haridās plays a different role in the different *Avatāras* of the Lord. In this *Avatāra* he is the *Āchāryya* of the Holy Name.

The Holy Name is both the Method and Object of worship of every pure soul. In the Kali Age nothing less than the Name Himself can effect the deliverance of fettered souls. This Teaching of Sree Gaursundar is exemplified by the life of Thākur Haridās. In order, therefore, to be able to understand the method and object of worship that can alone be acceptable to a highly controversial Age like the present, which is least disposed to take anything on trust, it will be necessary to follow attentively the events of the life of the *Āchāryya*.

The fashionable theology at Nabadwip, which was the cultural centre of Bengal at the time of the Appearance of the Lord, was frankly atheistical. The Philosophical School of the New Logic (Naba Nyaya) may be described as the attempt of our empiric reason to deny the necessity as well as practicability of all worship. The *jīva* is himself discovered to be both worshipper and worshipped. Worship itself is supposed to be but a concoction of the *jīva's* own erroneous speculations. The position to which

one of the most highly developed system of the Philosophy of Logic led the people of Nabadwip, at the time of the Appearance of the Lord, and through them was accepted by people all over the country, was exactly what was specifically the worst fitted for understanding the uncompromising pure form of worship which it was the Will of the Lord to propagate by the life of Thākur Haridās. Whatever name might be borne by the different system of speculative philosophy they are in common agreement as regards the logical necessity of atheism. Even the Geetā and the Bhāgavatam were taught at Nabadwip at this period as Scriptures of atheism. It gives us an idea of the audacity and range of activity of the New School of Logic of Nabadwip that it could devise interpretations even of the unambiguous texts of the Bhāgavatam itself in favour of their theory of rankest atheism. It is only to be expected in these circumstances that the Scholarship and acumen of Bengal should be generously recognised in all parts of the country and abroad and even by the atheistical *Vedantists* of Benares, who have always claimed for themselves the theological leadership of philosophical atheism in India.

Thākur Haridās made his appearance in the village of Budhan in the District of Jessor in East Bengal. This has made that part of the country since then a centre of the worship of Godhead by means of the *Kirtan*. Thākur Haridās was born in a Muhammedan family. He comes into the light of our definite narrative under his changed name of Haridās, which means literally 'the servant of Hari'; Hari being the Name of Godhead in the Scriptures. So Haridās must have given up his family and society in some manner that is not definitely known to us, had been the recipient of the mercy of a Vaishnava and had already made extraordinary progress on the path of pure devotion, although he was in the first flush of youth when he is found living as a recluse in the forest of Benāpole in his native District of Jessor. In the depth of the forest he resided in a solitary hut, worshipped the holy Tulasi, chanted daily the Holy Name three lacs (3,00,000) of times night and day and ate food cooked in the homes of Brāhmaṇas, which he obtained by begging.

The Hindu Chief, who was in charge of the Local Administration of that part of the country, bore the name of Rāmchandra Khān. He was one of the greatest of atheists and a hater of the servants of Vishnu (lit. the One All-pervading Lord). Haridās was treated with great reverence by the people. Rāmchandra Khān found this intolerable. He could not rest till he had actually devised a plan for effecting the humiliation of Thākur Haridās. For this purpose he did not hesitate to stoop to be basest of devices.

Rāmchandra Khān, finding that Haridās was reputed to be absolutely free from all vices, hit upon a plan of creating in him the vice by exposing which he hoped to accomplish his ruin. He summoned to his help the most famous harlots and told them to destroy the chastity of Haridās who was under the vow of continence as an ascetic. One of the harlots, who was young and possessed great beauty, undertook to effect his ruin in course of three days. Rāmchandra Khān pressed her to take an armed footman (*pāik*) who was to catch him red-handed and bring both of them for punishment. But the harlot proposed that she should at first go by herself and after being with Haridās once take the *pāik* to capture him on her second visit.

That harlot, having put on her best attire, then presented herself at nightfall at the solitary cell of Thākur Haridās. After making her obeisance to the Tulasī she went up to the entrance of the cell and bowing to the Thākur remained there standing. She then sat down at the door-step, exposing her body to the view of Haridās, and made confession of her uncontrollable passion for him praying to be favoured by his intimate society.

Thākur Haridās agreed to fulfil her wish after he had finished chanting the due number of the Name, bidding her in the meantime to wait and listen to the *Samkirtana* of the Name chanted by himself. The harlot on this assurance remained seated there as Haridās went on with his loud chant of the Holy Name till break of day. The harlot came away disappointed when it was morning, and informed Rāmchandra Khān that Haridās had promised to enjoy her society and that the promise would be carried out when she met him next night.

As the harlot presented herself before Thākur Haridās on the second evening he expressed his request that as on the previous occasion he could not keep his promise to her for the reason that he could not complete the chant of the due number of the Name, he would certainly fulfil her desire after the chanting of the due number of the Name had been completed; and he accordingly bade her wait there and listen to the chanting of the Name. The harlot made obeisance to the Tulasi and the Thākur and sat listening to the chanting of the Holy Name. But she naturally grew restive as the night was drawing to a close. The Thākur, noticing her impatience, told her that he had taken the vow of chanting a crore of the Name in course of the month. He had expected to finish the full number that night but could not do so although he had chanted Him the whole night. The number would be certainly completed by the next night and then the vow would be fulfilled and he would be in the position to enjoy her company. The harlot reported accordingly to Rāmchandra Khān.

On the third evening the harlot duly made her appearance and, after making obeisance to the Tulasi and the Thākur, sat at the entrance of the cell listening to the chanting of the Holy Name, chanting the Same herself, till the close of that night. The mind of the harlot was changed by chanting the Holy Name all night in the company of Thākur Haridās. She now fell prostrate at the Feet of Thākur Haridās and confessed to him everything regarding the plot of Rāmchandra Khān. She said she had committed endless sin as she was a harlot by trade. She begged the Thākur to save her, who was so vile, by his mercy.

Haridās Thākur replied that he knew everything about the Khān and would have left the place three days ago. He had delayed his departure by three days on her account. The harlot then prayed that he might mercifully instruct her as to how she was to get rid of the miseries of the worldly life. Thākur Haridās then tendered her this advice. 'Give away everything of your household to the Brāhmaṇas. Come and stay here in this cell. Chant constantly the Holy Name. Worship the Tulasi. You will then obtain the Feet of Krishna in no time'. After saying this and

instructing her in the Holy Name the Thākur rose up and left the place, chanting the Name of Hari.

Then that harlot on obtaining the command of the Guru gave away to the Brāhmaṇas all the wealth that she had. With shaven head and a single piece of cloth for wrapping her body she lived in that cell and took the Holy Name three lakhs of times in course of every night and day. She worshipped the Tulasi, ate uncooked food by chewing, and often fasted. The senses were controlled and love of Godhead manifested itself. She became a famous devotee and a great spiritual teacher; and Vaishnavas of the highest order often came thither to have a sight of her. The people were astonished by this wonderful behaviour of the quondam harlot and bowed with reverence whenever they spoke of the greatness of Haridās.

As the above theme is the subject of the highest importance to the present Age I have tried to keep scrupulously to the words of Sree Kavirāj Goswāmi in describing this famous event of the life of Thākur Haridās. The chanting of the Holy Name of Krishna imparted by a pure devotee rescued a youthful harlot who had tried to seduce the saint at the instigation of a most profligate atheist. By this process the harlot was not merely rescued from a life of shame but became a devotee of the Lord fit to lift others to the plane of perfect purity.

The chanting of the Holy Name can, therefore, reclaim the worst of sinners. The Holy Name has to be *heard* with reverence from the lips of a pure devotee. The Holy Name has to be received as a Sacrament from a pure devotee by complete submission at his feet. The Holy Name so received has to be constantly chanted by being free from all offence. The Tulasi has to be worshipped. All earthly possessions and all association with worldly people, especially in matters of food, clothing and residence, must be disowned. By this method, in a short time, the highest spiritual state is realisable. That state consists in serving exclusively the Feet of Krishna. This is the special Divine Dispensation for this Age of discord announced by the spiritual Scriptures and promulgated by the Supreme Lord, Sree Krishna-Chaitanya, through His eternal servant, Thākur Haridās.

The obvious objection to the above, that is likely to suggest itself to those who are too much addicted to the concerns of this world, is that it does not sufficiently appeal to the rationalistic imagination. The scheme seems to be dry and sterile. It also appears to be both meaningless and impracticable. Every admittedly futile speculation, despite its futility, seems to be more worthy of the serious consideration of the worldling than any transcendental proposition. Appearances are decidedly against the acceptance of the teaching of Thākur Haridās by the average merely intellectual worldling.

In the first place Thākur Haridās seems to ignore wholly the life that is ordinarily led by people all over the world. The new life, that is proposed, has apparently no point of contact with the life previously led by the disciple after election. This is not likely to appeal to those to whom the theory of materialistic evolution has become as it were the very breath of their nostrils. ‘Is a real gap or abrupt revolution possible in the world of life?’ ‘Can there be any such thing as the absence of proper purpose anywhere on the part of anybody in this fair world?’ Such and similar questions are bound to rush into the brain of all mental speculationists the moment they are asked to take the Holy Name of Krishna to the exclusion of every worldly function. The proposal seems to be so puerile and so queer and so utterly destructive of all that is near and dear to the heart of the average man!

It is for this reason that the *sādhus* are on principle opposed to discuss spiritual subjects with persons who do not really seek the Truth. Those, who think that for them there is no driving necessity for such quest, are not likely to follow seriously any elucidation of propositions that have nothing to do with anything in which they feel really interested. The complete denial of any place to empiric conclusions, in the life that is proposed for the novice, is a staggering blow to most people who feel instinctively that they should refuse to listen to what obviously amounts to nothing short of an incitement to the commission of suicide.

The spiritual purpose itself cannot, however, be explained away nor whittled down by means of clever interpretations. The actual doings and saying of Thākur Haridās stand in the way

of those who try to do so. The Thākur literally acted as he taught. He acted also in accordance with the plainest meaning of his words. So there can be no ambiguity whatsoever.

The harlot's condition was not essentially different from that of any other worldling. The irrepressible desire for complete renunciation of the world, is the natural and inevitable result of the appearance of any real inclination for the spiritual life. The awakened worldly mind understands the necessity of committing mundane suicide in order to be reborn as the immaculate soul for the purpose of realising the life eternal. The material mind is not a figment of the empiric imagination. It is a real envelope and has to be completely discarded. It will not do to imagine this enveloping darkness as possessing anything in common with the light. The material mind is like a sheet of impenetrable darkness that completely shuts out the light of the soul. The soul is by his nature self-fulgent and has nothing to do with the material mind which acts as a screen to cut off the light of the soul from the view of the observer who uses the mind for such purpose. This is *fact* and not a hypothesis like the so-called 'truths' and 'facts' conceived by the material mind in the vanity of its ignorance. The spiritual realisation of the categorical difference and relation of utter incompatibility between mind and soul, is the first unique experience on the threshold of the awakened spiritual life.

The harlot was not 'converted' by speculative arguments addressed to the mind but simply by listening to the Name of Hari from the lips of Thākur Haridās and chanting the Same herself in his company. She had apparently the advantage of possessing at the very outset a natural regard for Thākur Haridās and for his advice and also for the holy Tulasi. This was the only antecedent condition of her redemption. Was it, therefore, blind and traditional faith that actually saved her in this crisis?

The answer must be in the negative. Those, who are most officially given to the cult of *blind faith*, are not necessarily attracted towards the actual devotee. The affinity for the true soul is itself a spiritual, that is to say perfectly self-conscious, impulse. It must be most carefully distinguished from the blind, material impulse which is so common and which, as a matter of fact, is the worst form of

obstacle in the way of the realisation of the spiritual life. The instinctive affinity of the harlot for Haridās is an activity of the soul and as such is, therefore, perfectly moral, perfectly self-cognisant and categorically different from sensuous sentimentality that ordinarily passes in this world as '*blind*' faith. Faith is the instinctive attitude of the soul towards the Truth and can, therefore, never be blind. It is the blind who in their blindness confound true faith with the counterfeit ware with which alone they happen to be, unfortunately for themselves, only too familiar.

Real faith can alone lead one to the presence of the pure soul. The material mind cannot reach the proximity of a *sādhu*. The harlot possessed the spiritual faculty by which it was possible for her to really approach Thākūr Haridās. The *Shāstras* say that this true instinctive reverence for *sādhus* is the result of previous unconscious association with the pure devotees of the Lord.

For the proper unconscious association with *sādhus* also sensuous sentimentality is often the chief hindrance. The sensuous sentimentalists seek the gratification of his own senses. He, therefore, is least disposed to serve the *sādhu* on the account of the latter. It is going against his grain. The *sādhus* accordingly keep away from psilanthropists as these are not willing to learn to get rid of their sentimentality. A pseudo-devotee, who parades his false sentimentality, readily enough obtains the cheap reverence of all worldly persons as his due, by misunderstanding of the purpose of the Scriptures. Such a person is not likely to bow to the *sadhu*, as he really wants to be served himself. Plain worldly people are likely to be more easily benefited by the process of unconscious association with the *sādhus*. Those who bring with them any previously formed notions regarding the nature of the *sādhus*, find it difficult to get rid of those false sentiments which stand in the way of their associating on a proper footing with the real *sādhus*. The only natural way of associating with the devotees of Godhead consists in doing whatever the *sādhu* wants one to do and in the way that he advises, without expecting any desirable or undesirable result to oneself therefrom. The harlot possessed something like this natural faith in *sādhus* by reason of her previous unconscious association with the devotees of Godhead.

The immoral life, that was being actually led by the harlot, did not stand in the way of her redemption. The point is made absolutely clear by the fact that she went to Thākur Haridās for the purpose of seducing him. This shows also that her instinctive faith in *sādhus* was not coloured by any conventional moral sentiments. This was an advantage. Too rigid empiric morality obstructs spiritual awakening more effectively than even confirmed immorality. This is due to want of humility and spirit of submission to the *sādhu* that is sure to be engendered more or less by the dogmatic professor of conventional morality. True morality is never possible prior to spiritual awakening. That which passes as morality in the society of worldlings, is only a hypocritical, and, therefore, more dangerous form of immorality. The moral instinct proper, which belongs to the soul, must not be confounded with this hypocritical immorality and its conventions. The harlot was not hampered by the conventions of a hypocritical morality. She possessed an open mind with a natural liking for the society of really pure souls, although she herself was actually leading a life that is condemned by moralists. But as it is not possible for a person to be really and fully moral before he realises the nature of his true self, the case of the harlot, instead of being worse, was in certain respects better than that of the conventional moralist who is rigidly committed to the casuistical defence of the unspiritual life that he actually leads.

It is not, of course, intended to undervalue the principle of morality in anyway. That instinct, in its pure form, as in the case of every other instinct, belongs to the soul. The form, in which it passes current in the world, is only the perverted reflection of the real principle and is not conducive to spiritual life. Its apparent advantages are strictly confined to this perverted existence. Whatever tends to reconcile us to the worldly life, stands self-condemned for that very reason. Empiric morality is fully open to this charge of pandering to the unspiritual life. As a matter of fact neither conventional morality nor conventional immorality are praised by the *sādhus*, as, by themselves, they stand without any relation to the Truth. As soon as our conduct gets related to the Truth it assumes its natural state which has nothing

to do with either the conventional moral or immoral principle of this world. To call the spiritual conduct as merely moral in the ordinary conventional sense of the world, would, therefore, be wholly misleading. The spiritual conduct is no doubt perfectly wholesome, being free from all affinity with the unwholesome things of this world. The so-called 'moral' conduct based on worldly experience owes all its value to its worldly utility. This fact categorically differentiates spiritual 'purity' from worldly morality. There is, of course, no possibility of immoral conduct on the spiritual plane. In the absence of all possibility of immorality there is no scope for worldly morality in the realm of the Absolute. The Kingdom of Godhead accommodates all varieties of conduct by endowing all of them with perfect wholesomeness. Can such conduct be appropriately called 'moral' in the conventional sense of the term?

For instance the trade of the harlot is in this world generally held to be utterly immoral. Is it possible for the 'ethical' mind to conceive of a state of existence that is infinitely higher than any conceivable worldly moral excellence?

Those fanatics who, grossly misunderstanding the nature of the subject treated by the spiritual Scriptures, set up as orthodox and uncompromising 'believers' in the 'letter' of the Scriptural texts and try to 'reform' the 'abuses' of this world by immoral regulations that are profanely attributed to Godhead Himself on the strength of such silly and mischievous interpretation, deserve to be put into the pound in the company of those 'innocent' creatures that are mercifully denied the quality of voicing their 'no-tions' for harming everybody. There are hypocritical pedants who affect to hold up their nose at the very sound of the name of a harlot and forthwith prescribe penitential punishment of the most atrocious kind for *reforming* their *morals* in 'obedience' to the injunctions of the Holy Scriptures. The Devil is also permitted to quote the Scriptures for his purposes.

Fanatics and hypocrites were in possession of the stage of the tragic *drama* of wordly life at the time when Thākur Haridās emerged on the bewildered vision of those pseudo-religionists and began to supply by his actual conduct the real explanation of the

only purpose of all the Scriptures, by electing the harlot as the fittest and the very first object of the Divine Grace. He was naturally opposed by the renegade Brāhmaṇa Rāmchandra Khān who, in order to exploit the letter of the Scriptures for the accomplishment of his villainy, gave it out as his 'duty' to put down by all means a Muhammedan who had the temerity to set up as the expounder of the *Shāstras* of the Hindus!

This brings us to the principle of hereditary caste. The teaching of the *Shāstras* belongs exclusively to the *twice-born*. The *Shāstras* themselves lay down elaborate rules by which to constitute the community of the Brāhmaṇas who are to be the only teachers of them. This last part of the system had been allowed to pass out of the memory of the people, and, in its place, had been substituted by gradual and insidious steps and by general connivance, the principle of heredity. The *hereditary* Brāhmaṇas by the strict *Shāstric* test are no Brāhmaṇas at all. Rāmchandra Khān was the champion of this corrupt system, not for any real regard born of sincere conviction for the merits of the system itself or from any knowledge of the *Shāstras*, but, as it always happens in such cases, from malice and insolence.

If Haridās Thākur would practise the function strictly reserved for hereditary Brāhmaṇas then the whole system of caste based upon the principle of heredity is challenged at its source. If a Muhammedan can become a Brāhmaṇa, the present social system of the Hindus, which is claimed to be part and parcel of the Religion, is utterly demolished. This was bound to agitate profoundly all caste-Hindus.

Nor was this all. The chanting of the Holy Name of Krishna was also practised with a loud voice. This was an entirely novel mode of worship to the Hindus of that time. The new out-caste apostle of the eternal religion, in opposition to all current rituals and forms of worship, was declaring to admiring Hindus an apparently new form of worship as the one enjoined by the *Shāstras*. Could all the contemporaneous Hindus be so utterly mistaken that they required to be imparted *ab initio* the knowledge of the fundamentals of their own religion by a Muhammedan, against

the teaching of all the hereditary Brāhmaṇas, the exclusive teachers of the same by the rules of the *Shāstras* themselves?

It is quite easy to imagine the intense consternation and hostility that were naturally aroused in an Age of casuistical fanaticism by the preaching of the simple doctrines of the Religion of the Truth. The chanting of the Holy Name of Godhead is the only sacrament of the true religion prescribed for the present Age. This simplification is in keeping with the spirit of all the other sacraments authorised by the *Shāstras*. The other sacraments are not suitable for this Age which is too much addicted to sceptical argumentation *ad nauseum*. As soon as one realises the true nature of the soul all his activities are thenceforward naturally and necessarily performed on the spiritual plane. The narrow ceremonial view of the sacrament is due to the imperfect spiritual vision of the observer. The sacrament may, therefore, differ in the different Ages in its external appearance, which, is however, the only view that is open to the novice for whose special benefit it is ordained.

The chanting of the Holy Name is liable to the least objection even as sacrament, from a casuistical Age. The Mercy of Godhead must be sought willingly, nay with the keenest hankering that is born of positive liking, for obtaining real touch with him in order to serve Him by means of the spiritual senses of the pure soul.

The sacrament implies a real mutual personal relationship between the Lord and His servant. It is definite, concrete and loving, but in the spiritual (not abstract, notional or concocted *i.e.*, purely mental) sense. The personality, senses and functions of the soul are not comprehensible to, nor admissible by the mind. The mental refusal to recognise the substantive existence of the soul, is the greatest curse of this Age of dogmatic empiricism. This piece of dogmatism must be got rid of.

The empiric reason is confronted to a fight at its own weapons when it is summoned to admit the *rationale* of the worship of Godhead by means of His Name only. The Name of Godhead must not also be supposed to connote or denote anything of this world, in no shape, neither as precept nor concept. This should in all

conscience more than satisfy the passion for abstraction of even the Moslem iconoclast.

The next point is that the Name of Godhead must be admitted as true and not as a mere concoction of the material mind. The Scriptural Name of Godhead is not a thing of this world. The Scriptural Name is Himself Divine. The Scriptural Name requires to be served with the tongue by an attitude of humble supplication for manifesting His Divine Nature to the pure serving essence of our soul. Even the most rabid iconoclast need have no cause of complaint against such service. It is this pure service that was practised by Thākur Haridās, which, he maintained, was the only sacrament enjoined by the Scriptures as suitable for this Age of wrangling sophistry (*Kali Yuga*.) The implications of this position will be more fully developed in course of this Narrative at the proper stages.

As the service of Godhead is the eternal function of the individual soul in the state of grace, it transcends all mental and physical activities. The *Shāstras* accordingly reserve the service of Godhead to those who are twice-born. The terms Brāhmaṇa (one who has knowledge of Godhead as *the Great*) and Dwija (twice-born) applied to persons who are eligible for the service of Godhead, refer to the individual soul in the state of grace and not to caste. If Thākur Haridās be regarded as a Moslem born, it is then the physical body that is denoted by the Name Thākur Haridās. If Rāmchandra Khān claimed to be a Brāhmaṇa on the strength of his seminal birth in a Brāhmaṇa(?) family, he also supposed his physical body to be Brāhmaṇa. The objection of Rāmchandra Khān to Thākur Haridās, on the strength of such foolish interpretation of the *Shāstras*, was met by Thākur Haridās by pity and indifference. Rāmchandra Khān did not possess the good fortune of the harlot, whom he made the dupe of his devilries, to be enabled to listen to the Holy Name of Godhead from the lips of Thākur Haridās. A Brāhmaṇa, who claims to be such by right of seminal birth, is less fit for spiritual service than even an open minded harlot.

From Fulia Thākur Haridās moved off to Chāndpur. The village of Chāndpur was situated in the present District of Hugly

in the neighbourhood of Tribeni (Saptagrām-Tribeni). Balarām and Jadimandan Āchāryas, the *purohits* (family-priests) of Hiranya and Gobardhan Mazumdārs of Tribeni, had their residence in the village of Chāndpur which lay to the east of Tribeni. The word 'Mazumdār' is the equivalent of 'Majmu ādar', the title of an accountant of the royal revenues under the Nawabs. Balarām Āchāryya was the disciple of Thākur Haridās and regarded himself as his servant. Haridās stayed with Balarām Āchāryya in the later's house. Balarām Āchāryya with great care made arrangements for the residence of the Thākur in the village. Haridās lived there in a hut and accepted the alms of food at the house of Balarām Āchāryya. The boy Raghunāth Dās son of Bobardhan, was at this time studying under Balarām Āchāryya. Raghunāth used to go to Thākur Haridās for a sight of the saint. Haridās was merciful to the boy. Thākur Haridās's mercy was the cause of the subsequent attainment of spiritual enlightenment by Raghunāth Dās. The following event occurred while Thākur Haridās was staying at Chāndpur.

One day Balarām Āchāryya, by his humble supplications, induced Thākur Haridās to repair to a gathering at the house of the Mazumdārs. The two brothers stood up on seeing the Thākur and, falling at his feet, offered him a seat with great respect. There was present in the assembly a very large number of Pandits, Brāhmaṇas, and other worthy people. The two brothers Hiranya and Gobardhana were also very learned persons. All present spoke highly in praise of Thākur Hāridas. This met with the hearty approval of the brothers. It was known to all that the Thākur recited the Holy Name three lakhs of times daily. The Pandits accordingly talked about the greatness of the Name as Thākur Haridās assumed his seat in their midst.

Some of the Pandits said that the cure of all sinfulness automatically results from uttering the Name of Godhead. Others expressed the view that the individual soul (*jīva*) is freed from the miseries of this life by uttering the Name. Haridās declared that those two were not proper fruits of the chanting of the Name. Love to the Feet of Krishna is aroused by taking of the Name. Haridās said that the condition of a person who realises such love

is described in a shloka of the *Bhāgavatam* (*Bhāg.* 11-2-35). ‘A person, who is habituated to serve Krishna in the ways enunciated above (*viz.*, hearing, chanting, *etc.*), loses all control over his mind and, by reason of realising the quality of love by chanting the Name of Krishna, experiences an anxious restlessness of the heart. He loses all consideration for the opinion of the people and laughs, cries, shouts, sings and dances at intervals’. Salvation and destruction of sinfulness are only attendant results—‘Just as the rising of the Sun dispels all darkness, so also no sooner does the Name of Hari manifests Himself than He forthwith destroys all the sins of the person who utters His Name’.

Haridās requested the Pandits present to explain the above shloka. All the Pandits desired Thākur Haridās to elucidate its meaning to them. Haridās who had recited the shloka now said that even before the Sun actually begins to appear darkness is dispelled by his approaching light and the fear from thieves, ghosts and demons is also destroyed; and, on his actual appearance, all useful activities begin to be performed. In like manner sins and other evils are destroyed by the reflected light of the approaching Sunrise of the full manifestation of the Name; while, on the actual appearance of the Name, love to the Feet of Krishna is aroused. Salvation is a trivial result which is effected by the dim reflection cast by the Name as His Appearance draws nigh. The devotee does not wish to accept salvation which is at first offered by Krishna. Haridās quoted the two following shlokas of the *Bhāgavatam* in support of his contention (*Bhāg.* 6-2-42; 5-19-12). ‘If the dying Ajāmil could attain to the realm of the Vaikunṭha by calling upon Hari, which happened to be the name of his son, who can estimate the effect if the Name is chanted with faith?’ ‘My own,’ says Krishna, ‘Never accept the different forms of salvation, *e.g.*, attainment of My realm, attainment of power and wealth and fame similar to Mine, the privileges of dwelling near Me, even the favour of becoming one with Myself; all of which privileges I offer them unreservedly. They covet nothing except My service.’

Gopāl Chakravarti was a Brāhmaṇa who belonged to the household of the Mazumdārs, being employed to carry letters and

money to the king. He had to go up to Gauḍa and appear before the Pādishāh himself in connection with the discharge of his official duties. He used to convey twelve lakhs of rupees annually to the king. He was, in his early youth, very handsome and a very good scholar. Gopāl lost his patience on hearing that salvation can be obtained by the dim reflection of the Name. He then spoke in great anger.

'Pandits who are in assembly here', said Gopāl, 'All of you have heard the conclusion announced by one whose trade is to amuse people by dance and song. Emancipation, which is unattainable by means of knowledge of the Brāhmaṇ in crores of births, is held by him to follow automatically the manifestation of the *dimmest* reflection of the Name'.

At this point Haridās entreated Gopāl not to entertain any doubt on the subject, as the *Shāstras* themselves declare that liberation from the bondage of the world results at once from the appearance of the dim reflection of the Name. The bliss of liberation is utterly trivial in comparison with the happiness of loving service. It is for this reason that the devotees do not accept liberation. The Thākur then quoted the shloka of *Haribhaktisudhodaya* (H. Bh. S. 14-31). 'Teacher of the universe, to me, immersed in the pure ocean of bliss by meeting Thee, the bliss of the attainment of the knowledge of the Brāhmaṇ (the Great Nourisher) appears to be as contemptible as the tiny speck of water filling a whole in the ground indented by the hoof of cattle.'

The Brāhmaṇ now became furious. He shouted out that he would assuredly cut off his nose if liberation does not result from the dim reflection of the Name. On hearing the blasphemy the members of the assembly gave vent to their sorrow at the behaviour of Gopāl. Mazumdār reproved him severely. Balarām Achāryya expressed his indignation by remarking that the offender was a fool fit only for hair-splitting sophistry and was perfectly ignorant of the principle of devotion. How could he go the length of insulting even Thākur Haridās! He was doomed to perdition beyond all help.

Haridās rose to leave the place as he heard the words of the Brāhmaṇ. Mazumdār forthwith severed all his official connec-

tion with Gopāl and with all the assembled persons fell prostrate at the feet of Thākur Haridās. Haridās smiled and spoke sweet words. He said 'none of them had done anything offensive except that Brāhmaṇa. The Brāhmaṇa was also not to blame. His addiction to controversial discussion was the cause of his strange behaviour. The greatness of the Name is not realisable by futile discussion. How could he, therefore, understand those principles?' He then bade them depart to their homes in peace, expressing the wish that no one might come to grief by his connection with himself.

Hiranya-dās came back to his house after receiving this assurance of pardon and forbade Gopāl to cross his threshold. In course of three days the offending Brāhmaṇa was attacked with virulent leprosy. His very prominent nose rapidly melted away. The fingers of his hands and feet, rivalling the champaka buds in their delicacy, all shrivelled up and dissolved away by the corrosive force of the malady. On beholding this all the people were filled with great wonder. They praised Haridās and made obeisance to him with reverence.

Shri Krishna Kavirāj Goswāmi concludes the above account with the pregnant observation that although Haridās did not feel offended by the conduct of the Brāhmaṇa yet did Godhead award the offender the punishment due to his transgression. It is the nature of the devotee of Godhead that he ever pardons the faults of the ignorant. It is Krishna's Nature that He cannot bear any calumnyation of His devotees even through ignorance.

Haridās was grieved at heart on hearing of the misery of the Brāhmaṇa. He apprised Balarām Āchāryya of his intention to leave the place and proceed to Shāntipur.

The account is prefaced by Krishnadās Kavirāj Goswāmi with the remark that the event narrated is most wonderful for the reason that it contains the clear elucidation, from the lips of the Āchāryya himself, of the Divine Dispensation of the present Age. The reader must not forget the point, which is the centre of interest of the whole narrative detailed in this work, viz., that Thākur Haridās is the Āchāryya or the practising teacher, authorized by Godhead to promulgate the congregational chanting (*Sam-*

kirtana) of the Holy Name, which is the mode of worship that alone can demolish the worst form of atheism in the name of 'free' thinking that is unfortunately so prevalent now-a-days all over the world and which is the terrible but inevitable natural consequence of the exclusive worship of Mammon by all the resources of mind and body.

The world is gratuitously assumed by a pseudo-rationalism to be the only reality and the attempt is, therefore, made to ascertain the methods by following which we can attain the gratification of the senses which function appears to be the relationship naturally subsisting between ourselves (?) and the world. The senses are assumed to be an integral and undetachable part of ourselves. The mind is identified with the senses on the one hand and the soul on the other. The senses connect the mind, or the soul, by this assumption, with the external world. The senses are the eyes of the whole system. All pain and pleasure suffered by the mind are due to the way in which the mind directs the senses in their relations with the world. The mind cannot apparently know by intuition, at any rate ordinarily, all the consequences of any particular mode of employment of the senses. The mind can, indeed, try to guess about them. But it can never be quite sure about any occurrence till after actual experience. This uncertainty is supposed to be reducible to certainty if it could be possible to know from experience the uniform 'laws' that are assumed to govern all phenomenal occurrences under all circumstances. This hypothesis of the uniform operation of the 'laws' of Nature has been built up by the accumulated 'experiences' of the race. But as the occurrences themselves present an infinity of complications it has not been possible to attain to anything like certainty in isolating the single threads of the web in order to be certain of our hypothesis in every case by being enabled to reproduce all the occurrences of Nature in the Laboratory.

Assuming that the above object of scientific endeavour will be realisable in practice in the long run, its success should make it possible for us to prolong the possibility and scope of sensuous enjoyment *ad infinitum*. If we fail to be perfectly 'happy' by the complete elimination of 'pain' by the proper employment of the

'forces' of Nature in the way that is calculated to produce such a result under the then known 'laws of Nature,' our labours should still have really no abiding value for ourselves. But has our 'experience' up to the present moment taken us an inch towards the realisation of unmixed or lasting pleasure? Is 'pleasure' really different from 'pain'? Or is it only different by circumstance? That which is food for the goose is food for the gander, is not found to be more true than most hypotheses. Variation, which is sought to be eliminated, is found on close inspection and analysis to be the indispensable condition of the pleasures itself. We are, therefore, left inevitably to the present condition of necessary and complete ignorance in order to have any 'pleasure' at all by our dealings with the world by means of our senses.

It is argued that pleasure and pain might themselves be enriched, deepened and broadened by more experience and that it is worth our while to help this process in a conscious manner. To this the answer would be that the better and more detailed realisation of our utter ignorance, in the midst of the mockery of a civilization that is claimed to be based upon knowledge, would be a self-contradiction that is not likely to appeal to the assorting instinct of our rational nature and is calculated to make our condition no better than it is. Civilized wickedness and filth are not preferable to any nuisance of the uncivilized state. Satan, who may be allowed to possess the perfection of worldly culture, is probably more miserable than the uncivilized Gond. It would be difficult for the unbiased reason of man to choose between materialistic savagery and materialistic civilization.

'Ignorance is misery', says one of the wisest of proverbs. Increase of ignorance is not any decrease of misery. Ignorance is supposed to be the state of all empiric knowledge which is improperly assumed to be alone available to man. Our very nature is sometimes supposed to be incapable of real enlightenment. This axiom of pessimism is exploited for advising man to turn a deaf ear to the Teacher of the Absolute. It is even more disastrously

 utilized for condemning the devotees themselves.

It cannot be otherwise. The soul is in this case identified with the mind-cum-body. Abandonment of the mind, therefore, appears as equivalent to the abandonment of the soul, or to self-immolation. The mind seems to be our all. Groping in perpetual ignorance appears as our inevitable function mis-called 'Search for the Truth.' Empiric enthusiasts imaginatively describe this process as the 'eternal quest'. These metaphors and denunciations do not, however, help us in anyway; but, on the contrary, they only tend to obstruct the process of the real quest.

Gopāl Chakravarti is a typical Brāhmaṇa of the pseudo-Vedāntic School of Sankara. He has no doubts regarding the goal of the Vedānta. According to him the attainment of the Knowledge (?) of the Brahman, Who possesses no distinctive function at all that is capable of being defined, is the goal. By the attainment of the knowledge of the real Nature of the Brahman, the individual soul is freed from all the miseries of his apparent existence which only seems to be limited and is, therefore, only supposed to be miserable. As there is only One Entity, *viz.*, the Brahman, Who is ever (?) free from all defects and all merits, the goal can be no other than complete absorption(?) into the One. On the attainment of this desirable goal there is no difference between the devotee, devotion and the Object of devotion. The service (?) of the Brahman is thus only a temporary means to a final end, which means being different from the end and is, therefore, necessarily terminable with the attainment of the goal. It is the highest form of religion to try to realise, by the appropriate methods, the knowledge of, and absorption into, the undifferentiated Brahman. When the individual soul becomes one with the Brahman the state of separate existence and necessity for any kind of distinguishable function terminate together. According to Gopāl Chakravarti and his associates this knowledge of the Brahman is higher than service and the termination of both (?) knowledge and service is the highest goal. Gopāl is quite sure that this is the only teaching of the Scriptures. It may be observed at this place that *Sankara* does not discard the principle of worship, but declares its tentative necessity which is terminable

on self-realisation which, according to him, is identical with complete absorption into the One.

Thākur Haridās distinguishes between devotion, work and knowledge. The soul in the bound state desires one of two alternative functions. If he is optimistic he wants greater scope for enjoyment. If he happens to be pessimistic he hankers for emancipation from the misery of mundane existence.

The latter, *viz.*, the pessimist, sometimes thinks that real emancipation is impossible so long as the consciousness of one's being different or separate from the One, persists. It is to this extreme school of atheistic Vedāntists, advocating unification with the Brahman, that Gopāl Chakravarti, like most cultured people of his day as well as of this, happened to belong by his empiric predisposition. According to this school fruitive work leads to empiric knowledge and the latter to the third position of inexpressible oneness with the Brahman. Devotion or service is classed under fruitive work, which is assigned a lower position than empiric knowledge. The process of advance to the goal of complete unification with the One, according to this school, is devotion (*blind* faith rendering possible utilitarian work of a low order) (Bhakti?) leading to work of a higher order (Karma), which, in its turn, leads up to empiric knowledge of the uselessness of all knowledge and all activity terminating in perfect absorption into the One (*Brahma-laya*).

Haridās is neither a pessimist nor an optimist. He is an absolutist. He is convinced that the theory of complete absorption into the One is logically unsound and opposed to the real teaching of the Scriptures. The alternatives of enjoyment and abstention from enjoyment exhaust indeed, the possibilities of function of the mind and body; but they have no application to the soul who is located beyond the reach of body and mind. The soul is substantially different from the mind and body. The soul is the substantive reality while the mind is only his perverted reflection in the mirror of limited existence. The mind is the material shadow so to say of the soul who is the spiritual substance. The mind is a material phenomenon galvanised into the appearance of self-consciousness by the impulse communicated to it by the deluded

soul. Mind is the shadow of the perverse soul mirrored in matter. This description is, and can be, but an imperfect and misleading analogy of the relationship that actually subsists between mind and soul. The shadow of the material substance is not categorically different from the substance itself, both of them being material phenomena. The shadow of the soul in this case is, however, categorically different from the soul, being a material phenomenon pure and simple. The soul in his spiritual or natural conditional is categorically different from material phenomenon. The soul is self-consciousness itself. There can be no such thing as ignorance in the soul. There can be no such thing as genuine self-consciousness in the mind which is non-soul. The apparent self-consciousness of the mind is really a state of complete ignorance which is given its shape and colour by the qualities of matter, *viz.*, grossness, limitation, perishability, changeableness, etc. These unwholesome traits are non-existent and impossible in the soul.

The soul is capable of forgetting his real nature mistaking himself to be a material entity. The soul is not above one possible weakness, *viz.*, wilful rebellion against the Truth. It is a real blunder on the part of the soul to choose to be a rebel. But the soul is perfectly free to refuse to serve the Truth, *i.e.*, Godhead. He thereby proves deliberately false to his own substantive nature, because it is the constituent function of the soul, in his natural state of perfect spiritual existence, to be the exclusive servant of the Truth. The soul who rebels against Godhead is punished by his exile to the phenomenal world and by incarceration in the double material case of mind and body. The point will be further elucidated later.

Fruitive work and empiric knowledge are functions of the mind and, therefore, purely material phenomena. By means of such work and knowledge the deluded soul cannot realise his natural function for the plain reason that they are not his proper function at all. By means of work and knowledge the soul only moves in a vicious circle of material existence which is seemingly conscious but really one of absolute ignorance. This is the explanation why by means of the undifferentiated knowledge of the Brahman freedom from the fetters of work and knowledge of this

anomalous existence can be attained by crores of years of endeavour. This is what Gopāl says. The delay is, however, not due to the complexity of the process, as he supposes it to be. So long as a person continues to suppose that an impersonal all-pervasive Entity is the goal of knowledge one is not yet freed from the real ignorance of his spiritual function. This must be so because Truth is not impersonal.

Neither is Truth a person in the sense in which the mentalists, including Sankara, apparently want us to understand the term. Spiritual personality is categorically different from the distorted empiric notion of the same. Until the nature of the personality of the Truth is properly grasped one continues in the deluded state which is also the state of limitation (bondage). Therefore Gopāl Chakravarti is right, although he is unaware of it, in holding that the chance of emancipation of a person who has attained to the notion of Godhead as an impersonal and inactive, although all-pervasive and transcendental, Entity, is very slight. Gopāl does not understand that his ideal person is also necessarily no less deluded than himself if he supposes his condition to be the goal.

The interpretation of the text relied upon by Gopāl Chakravarti, said Thākur Haridās, is that of a person who does not understand the Nature of the Name by reason of his having no access to Him. The deluded person is no longer consciously contradicting himself and is not, therefore, insincere in the sense of being double-tongued. He is certainly to be pitied. Neither can his conduct be regarded as sincere inasmuch as it is opposed to his real nature of which he only happens to be ignorant by his own conscious perversity. The empiric casuist who affects to believe in the impersonal nature of the Truth is only pushing his conscious perversity of the choice of untruth to its logical conclusion. If the deliberate error is not ignored his conduct cannot be regarded as consistent being altogether untrue.

Gopāl Chakravarti's source of error lay deeper than the plane on which he stood and was, therefore, naturally incomprehensible to him in his condition of cultured perversity. The Vaishnavas, who alone understand the real cause of the worldly ailment, alone possess the true spirit of toleration. Thākur Haridās showed his

toleration of the rank atheism of deluded Gopāl Chakravarti by abstaining from disturbing him further. This toleration really means the withdrawal of his causeless apparently aggressive mercy from a deluded soul whose opposition to Godhead is likely to be increased by the process. It is the greatest possible misfortune that can befall a conditioned soul to miss the special mercy of the Vaishnava by his successful opposition to the Truth. The apparent intolerance of a Vaishnava is as helpful to a person as his tolerance of evil. The Vaishnava never co-operates with the offending soul in his sinful activities. He does not agree to be false to himself and his eternal Master to please the confirmed apostate. Such sympathetic toleration of evil is a grave offence against the Truth notwithstanding the significant fact that it alone is relished by the pantheistic school of the pseudo-Vedantists.

The point reached marks almost the limit of rational discussion towards the spiritual issue, that is open to the empiricist. He cannot proceed further without discarding the method of empiricism by giving up completely the process of his un-aided effort. It was not possible for Gopāl Chakravarti to retrace his steps by any other method. That he was not at all prepared for this is proved by his offensive conduct towards Thākur Haridās who had, therefore, no other alternative but to leave him to the mercies of Maya. But the actual goodwill of Haridās towards the offender bore its fruit in the swift punishment, that could be intelligible to the sufferer himself, that smote him in the form of leprosy. Gopāl was, thereby, afforded an excellent opportunity of revising his impersonal doctrine. But he was of course free to avail of it or not.

The Godless attitude is an attitude of absolute confidence in one's own judgment *and power*. The atheist is not at all disposed to submit to another in any circumstances. He has to be compelled to submit to non-God because he can consistently submit only to compelling force. Such submission alone is appreciated in the state of sin and ignorance which is a radically false position and necessarily entails constant irrational conduct on a really rational being unnaturally disposed to accept the same through the no less unnatural fear of punishment.

The Holy Name of Godhead is not a thing of this world. The Name of Godhead is identical with Godhead Himself. The Godhead appears in this world in the Form of the Name on the lips of His pure devotees. He appears as the transcendental Sound on the spiritual lips of the soul in the state of grace.

The Name of Godhead appearing on the lips of a pure devotee as the Transcendental Sound, is perceptible as such only to the spiritual ear. These statements are likely to appear absurd and puerile to the dogmatic impersonalist. Can the soul, he will persist to ask, have lips and ears? Can the soul have senses? But can the empiricist know, even if he have?

The transcendentalists maintain that the soul has an infinity of senses of which the physical senses, are a *perverted reflection*. There cannot even be the shadow of existence of the physical senses if there were no substantive spiritual senses. But there are also the spiritual senses themselves as distinct from but not unrelated to their corresponding shadowy reflections in this phenomenal world. This is involved in the very definition of the Absolute. The spiritual sense is categorically different from the physical sense. The spiritual senses are perfect and self-conscious, there being no interval or barrier of time or space between the sense and its possessor. The spiritual body is indivisible and perfectly self-conscious in every part and is identical with the owner of the body. All this is incomprehensible to us although it is perfectly consistent with the fundamental principles of indivisible substantive existence, that are also acceptable to the empiricist. The empiricist, although he may sometimes, under pressure of his own logic, seem to agree with the conclusions of transcendentalism, finds it impossible to adopt them in practice. The absolute conduct is not possible on the mundane plane to which he finds himself strictly confined by his own postulates backed by the real Deluding Potency.

If one is merely disposed to regard any sound as transcendental, such wish alone will not make the sound of his choice to become really transcendental. Similarly if a person is disposed to regard a transcendental Sound as an occurrence of the mundane atmosphere such attitude will not also affect the subjective nature of the transcendental Sound. There is real difference be-

tween the transcendental Sound and mundane sound. The transcendental Sound is identical with the object denoted by the sound. The mundane sound is separated from the object denoted by it by the intervals of time and space. To hear the mundane sound of the name of a Lion is not the same thing as to *see* the beast. On the spiritual plane the very word 'Lion' is identical with the animal. The animal is fully realisable by and in the hearing of his name. Whereas the real nature of the mundane animal, denoted by the mundane sound, ever remains a thing unknown.

The Name of Krishna is identical with Godhead. But the Name of Krishna does not manifest Himself on mundane lips nor to the mundane ear. The Name Krishna appears in His Form of the Transcendental Sound on the spiritual lips of His devotees and is heard by the spiritual ear of the submissive soul by the Grace of Krishna. The Name Krishna is identical with the Possessor of the Name. The Name Krishna appears to the listening ear, as He is, only by degrees. As soon as the dormant soul catches the first faint reflection of His Light he is at once completely free from the bondage of ignorance and sin. It is the Name Who comes of His Own accord to our fettered soul. The bound *jīva* has no access to the Presence of Krishna on his own initiative. Krishna's Approach is heralded by the harbinger of Light whose first glimmerings on their appearance put an end to all misconception regarding the categorical difference between light and darkness.

Unless and until the soul becomes aware of the true nature of spiritual existence by being so enlightened by the Source of all consciousness, he is sure to mistake the mind for his real self and the mental function as the only knowledge. If at this stage he does not wilfully shut his eyes but keeps them turned towards the growing Light he gradually and in due course obtains the sight of the concrete Source of all light. This is the mode of Appearance of the Holy Name. The sight of Krishna is alone capable of inspiring love for Krishna. This is the position of Thākur Haridās as explained by himself to the Pandits who were in assembly at the house of the Mazumdārs.

Thākur Haridās mercifully explains that the different concrete forms of the so-called 'liberation' concocted by the mentalists

as their unknowable *summum-bonum* are the outcome of the desire for sensuous gratification. If one could live in the happy realms of Krishna described in the Scriptures, the empiricist supposes that such a person should be enabled to enjoy more good things than are available on the Earth if his condition is really worth having. The same desire for extended opportunities of sensuous enjoyment happens also to be the real motive behind the formulation of the other 'forms' of the empiricist's 'saved' existence. The grossness of the ideal of liberation is fully unmasked when one is told that the salvationist's 'final' form is to become the *equal* of Godhead by merging with the Object of his *worship*?

It is to this unnatural and profane position that the unchecked speculations of the mentalists are logically bound to lead in the long run. Thākur Haridās ascribes the grossness of the ideal to the attitude of the empiric thinker, *viz.* the insatiable desire for sensuous pleasure.

The desire to enjoy is categorically different from, and wholly incompatible with, the desire to serve, to love. If one feels a real desire to serve Krishna he would lose all taste for his own enjoyment. All impurity, unwholesomeness and misery are fortunately and mercifully ordained by the Lord as the inevitable consequence of the insatiable desire for selfish enjoyment. But the soul who turns away from immediate enjoyment by considerations of greater prospective enjoyment in the sequel, cannot also for that very reason realise the condition of loving devotion to the Feet of the Lord, however strongly impressed he may profess to be of the desirability of such a state. He is, no doubt, free to think that he really desires it; but at the same time he is wholly incapable of ever attaining to it by such desire. But, says Thākur Haridās, he may nevertheless attain to love for Krishna by the Chanting of the Holy Name, by the Grace of the Holy Name Himself. This is the special Dispensation for the Age which is so irremediably speculative; and there is no other way open to the Age of attaining to the loving service of Krishna.

Haridās refers to the texts of the Scriptures to prove the truth of his statements. This is the only proper use of the *Shās-*

tras. The *Shāstras* bear witness to the Truth of the realisations of all really pure souls.

There is one other fact which is worthy of our notice. The Pandits of the learned assembly, headed by Hiranya Mazumdār the master of the house, took the side of Thākur Haridās. They not only strongly censured the conduct of Gopāl Chakravarti in the open assembly but Hiranya Mazumdār thought it his duty to renounce all further connection with a Brāhmaṇa who could be guilty of an act of courtesy to the devotee of Godhead. Nevertheless the Pandits and Mazumdār himself felt themselves involved in the sin of Gopāl Chakravarti by the unhappy circumstance of their having had to hear most reluctantly the blasphemous words uttered by Gopāl in their presence. For this sin the only expiation, prescribed by the *Shāstras*, was to seek in all humility the pardon of Thākur Haridās, *not for the offender* but for themselves. This is not mere courtesy but an unavoidable necessity if one really wants to serve the Truth. Any association, deliberate or accidental, with untruth tends to obscure our vision of the Truth, Who is, indeed, a very Jealous Master. Those who are disposed to serve the Truth with causeless, loving devotion, throw to the winds all considerations of ignorant propriety or ignorant justice and are never satisfied by serving the Truth by all their senses at all time and in all circumstances. By the grace of Thākur Haridās this instinct of loving devotion actually manifested itself in the conduct of those who had listened with faith to the Absolute Truth from his pure lips.

Sree Raghunāthdās Goswāmi was a child at this time. He used to visit the Thākur in his hut during his stay at Chāndpur. The boy was the fortunate recipient of the mercy of Thākur Haridās. This is considered by Shree Krishnadās Kavirāj Goswami as the real cause of Raghunāth Dās's subsequent unique devotion to the Feet of Sree Chaitanya. The mercy of a *sādhu* acts equally on all persons, irrespective of age, sex or condition, all of whom have an equal chance of being benefited by associating with a real *sādhu*. The interests of the soul are not capable of being adversely affected by any worldly conditions. The boy's soul has no defect of immaturity any more than that of an old man the

advantage of maturity. Such maturity or immaturity has no relevancy in one's associating with a *sādhu*. The boy's soul, equally with the soul of the old man, may or may not be disposed to listen to the words of a *sādhu* for the genuine purpose of acting up to the same. It is as necessary for a child to associate with a *sādhu* as for an adult; but in neither case one can be sure of obtaining the mercy of the *sādhu* with whom he may choose to associate. The *sādhu* is kind to one who is really inclined to serve Godhead. It is the function of a *sādhu* to foster one's inclination for the service of the Lord by means of his conduct and words. The articulated sound is, however, the *sādhu*'s unambiguous weapon to fight all un-Godliness. It should puzzle the muddled brain of the whole race of self-conceited empiricists to understand why and how the *sādhu* need have no other work except talking about almost anything to whom he likes. Any person, who is spoken to by a *sadhu* even for the tiny space of a second, has every chance of attaining the real object of life which is unattainable by infinite endeavour by any other method. Nay, it is our duty to listen to a real *sadhu*, if we are fortunate enough to meet him, in preference to all other duties which are not only of secondary importance but a positive obstruction on the path of the highest and only good.

CHAPTER XX

THAKUR HARIDAS BEFORE HIS MEETING WITH SREE GAURSUNDAR—(Contd.)

FROM Chāndpur Thākur Haridās came to the village of Fulia on the Ganges near Sāntipur, the home of Sree Advaita Āchāryya. Haridās was thereby enabled to associate with Āchāryya Gosāin who roared with delight on gaining the company of Haridās. Haridās, remarks Thākur Brindāvandas, floated on the ocean of the mellow quality (*rasa*) of Govinda (Cow-herd Krishna) by obtaining the society of Advaita.

The last sentence mentions an important truth. The psilanthropic sensualists (*prākrita sahajiyās*) affect to believe that Thākur Haridās had no access to the Amorous Pastimes of Sree Krishna, being exclusively devoted to the chanting of the Name. This shows ignorance of the real Nature of the Holy Name as well as of the transcendental amour. It is repeatedly declared by the *Shāstras* that the Name of Krishna is identical with His Form, Quality, Activity and Servitorship. The Bhāgavata (11-2-40) bears out the statement of Sree Rupa (Bh. R. Sindhu P. L.: 3-11) that liking for the chanting of the Name is the conclusive sign of the first appearance of spiritual amour. Those, who are addicted to sensuous pleasures, have no liking for the Name of Godhead. Those pseudo-ascetics, who do not chant the Name of Krishna, are really indifferent to the service of Godhead. Thākur Haridās could possess such an over-powering inclination for chanting the Name of Krishna by reason of his real love for the Lord and consequent real detachment from the pleasures of the world. Thākur Haridās, who was acquainted with the mellow quality of the Name of Krishna, is the greatest of teachers as he is alone authorised to admit one to the meaning of the *Shāstras* treating of spiritual amour. The mellow quality of

amorous love for Krishna is realised as the effect of the chanting of the Name of Krishna by the method that is free from offence against the Name. The psilanthropists are effectively shut out from all access to the experience of the real nature of the spiritual quality of amorous love by their offensive taking of the Name of Krishna. By reason of their excessive addiction to sensuous enjoyment, which is aggravated by chanting the Name without trying simultaneously to avoid committing such offence, the psilanthropists fall into the most heinous blunder of supposing that the spiritual amour is identical with gross sensuality. The only way of getting rid of the lust of the flesh is by chanting the Name of Krishna *by avoiding the ten offences against the Name*.

These particulars should enable the unbiased reader to realise the nature as well as the cause of the misunderstanding that is commonly entertained by both liberationists and elevationists in regard to the efficacy of the chanting of the Holy Name. Those who believe in the superiority of fruitive work and empiric knowledge, or, in other words, the average men of the world, find it impossible to sympathise with those psilanthropists who teach by their preachings and practice that the taking of the Name Krishna, without really giving up or endeavouring to give up the life of worldliness, is the highest and only duty of all persons. The psilanthropists have forfeited the sympathies of all honest well-wishers by leading a dissipated life of idleness and debauchery which is bound to result from taking the Name without abstaining from the commission of offences against the Name. The psilanthropists are opposed to those restrictive injunctions of the Scriptures that endeavour to put down immorality and worldliness. They find it convenient to suppose that it is possible to approach the Presence Divine with a heart deliberately bent upon sinfulness. They are profane enough, as the result of such habitual commission of offences, under the guise of piety, against the Name, to dare attribute even carnal desires to Sree Krishna and His eternal Consorts against the gravest and clearest warnings of Sree Rupa Goswami who is admitted by all as the Divinely authorized exponent of the nature of spiritual amour. We shall return again and again to this all-important subject as the narrative develops.

The life that was led by Thākur Haridās while he was living in the cave at Fulia, is described as follows by Krishnadās Kavirāj Goswāmi and it forms the authoritative refutation of the practices and arguments of the psilanthropists. 'Haridās kept constantly walking along the bank of the Ganges chanting aloud the Name 'Krishna'. Haridās surpassed all ascetics in his aversion to the pleasures of the world. All praise to his holy mouth which was ever full of the Name of Krishna. He did not experience a moment's disinclination to the Name of Govinda. His appearance underwent a constant and novel transformation under the influence of the mellow quality of devotion. Sometimes he danced all by himself. Sometimes he made a sound like that of a maddened lion. There were times when he cried in grief with a loud voice. Sometimes he would indulge in a mighty laughter that was haughty and deliberate. At times he shouted forth ejaculations of sorrow with a deep voice. Sometimes he would lie prostrate in a swoon. He would sometimes shout forth, in the hearing of the people, sounds that belonged to another world and would then explain the same in the most excellent manner. Shedding of tears, horripilation, laughter, swooning, sweating—the spiritual perturbations that are expressive of devotion to Krishna—manifested themselves all together in his holy form the moment Thākur Haridās entered the dance. The flow of the stream of joy was such as to drench all limbs. Even the worst of atheists (*pāshandas*) experienced a great pleasure on beholding the same and the wonder of the series of the beauteous horripilation of which the sight is coveted even by Brahmā and Siva. All the Brāhmaṇa residents of Fulia witnessed with rapture those holy manifestations. A deep faith took possession of the minds of all those people. In this manner Thākur Haridās lived on at Fulia. After bathing in the Ganges he rambled all over the place, chanting with a loud voice the Name of Hari.'

The activities of the devotees of Godhead are perfectly incomprehensible to the material mind of man for the simple reason that they do not target anything of this world. The mind cannot understand supermundane activities. It supposes that it has a right to be able to understand every occurrence that comes within

the range of its perception. Thākura Haridās appeared to the people of that time as a man living among men. He appeared to them to possess a physical body and senses. He was being fed in the ordinary way everyday at Advaitāchāryya's. He used his senses apparently in the same way as any other man. He might have probably been supposed to be a good man and as comparatively indifferent to the comforts of the body. But he did not as a matter of fact also really neglect anything that is absolutely necessary for the maintenance of life. There was nothing *super-mundane* about all this. Would it be proper to regard such a person on such testimony as a supernatural being? Even if we choose to consider him as supernatural on such evidence would we not be led from one mistake to another by such untenable concession to superstition? Would it not be a still greater folly to try to follow the life and conduct of such a person and ask others to do the same under such a notion? Is it feasible to follow with a clear conscience a person of whose conduct the true meaning is not at all possible for us to understand?

It would be both possible and useful to accept the mode of life of another person if by doing so our own existing interests and convictions would have a prospect of being demonstrably improved instead of being wholly suppressed. If all persons began all on a sudden to chant the Name of Hari night and day and to depend on others for the supply of food which is necessary for them for being able to perform the said function, would not such a course tantamount to an idle and suicidal folly?

The life of the devotee should have no value if it is not capable of helping us to perform our ordinary duties in a better way. The life must not only be practicable in itself but a distinctive and intelligible improvement on the one that it is to be allowed to replace. The life of Thākura Haridās as depicted above seemed to satisfy neither of these essential conditions.

As a matter of fact we shall see subsequently that Sree Chaitanya was regarded as an unbalanced sentimentalist by even the leading Vedantist Scholar of Benares, the recognised head-quarters of *Shāstric* culture of that day and this. Persons who devote their intellect to the study of the *Shāstras* in a systematic way, need not

thereby be rendered devoid of ordinary common sense. The absence of common sense is the usual charge that is brought by utilitarian thinkers against such scholasticism. The empiricists accept without reservation physical Nature, as it appears to their senses, as the Reality in its immediately available form to be understood for the purpose of deducing conduct that is proper for us to adopt in regard to the world. If the knowledge that is acquired has an evident likelihood of making ourselves unsuccessful in the struggle for physical existence the utilitarians have no patience for such knowledge.

The error of Vedantism, or rather of its interpretation by Sree Sankarāchāryya, from the point of view of the utilitarians, consists in this that it does not really provide for the needs of the life that one and all are under the necessity of actually leading in this world as the basis of all possible activities. It may not be possible for the utilitarians to refute the position of Sankara by means of metaphysical arguments. But it is their contention that the theoretical strength of Sankara's position is no refutation of its practical weakness. A Sankarite cannot himself be in love with the life that he recommends others to live. This is too grave a defect to be overlooked. It is even necessary to oppose Sankara in the interest of everybody including his followers. One must be forced to live, and live efficiently, against every other consideration to the contrary. The arguments of Sankara consequently are appreciated by the utilitarians but only as a speculative theory of existence that was never intended to be acted upon in practice.

Are we required to have a similar attitude towards Thākur Haridās also? Are we to suppose that what is perfectly proper and natural for Thākur Haridās is perfectly improper and unnatural for every other person? The path of devotion followed by Thākur Haridās is, however, not merely a beautiful conception of the human brain to be admired from a distance but which cannot and must not be followed in practice. Thākur Haridās actually led the life which he tells us is not only practicable but whose full acceptance is the only thing needful for its own sake.

Love for Krishna is the one thing needful. Amorous love is the highest form of such love. The realised practice of love

for Godhead is the only natural function of the free soul. It is possible for all souls to attain to it. Whoever possesses this spiritual love towards Krishna must be offered, as being a most loyal servant of the Lord, our unconditional homage. It is, however, not possible for the mind of man in the fallen state to understand the real nature of spiritual activities. This is the point of departure of the teaching of Thākur Haridās from that of Sankara, or rather from the current interpretation of the system of Sankara.

It is, says Thākur Haridās, practicable for a person in the state of sin to attain to the spiritual plane by the Grace of the Holy Name of Krishna. The Grace of the Name can be gained only by serving the Name in the proper manner. It is at once easy and difficult to understand how the Name is to be served. The Name is Krishna Himself. He Appears on the tongue of His devotee in the form of the *Transcendental Sound*. Listening to the Holy Name from the lips of a *sādhu* is the way in which He is to be served. The Name does not Appear on the tongue of a person who is not a *sādhu*. A *sādhu* benefits all by his chanting of the Name. One must be a *sādhu* in order to be able to serve Krishna by chanting the Name for the benefit of all.

The only way in which it is possible for a sinful man to become a *sādhu* is by serving the Name by his ear. The Name Appears in the form of the Transcendental Sound on the tongue of His devotee. This sound is identical with Godhead, the only object of our worship. The mode of worship of the Name consists in listening to the Transcendental Sound by means of the spiritual ear, because the fleshy ear cannot hear the transcendental sound.

The spiritual ear belongs to the soul, but in the case of the conditioned soul it is in the dormant state. Its function is then delegated to the material ear. But the soul should like to resume his own function if he likes and he is also likely to like to do so when he understands that it is necessary in his own interest to do so. In the state of wilful transgression the soul is forgetful of himself and his natural function. The *sādhu* (*i.e.*, the pure soul in his natural state) possesses the power, delegated to him for the purpose by Krishna Himself, of making the transcendental sound be heard by the forgetful soul. As soon as the

fettered soul hears the transcendental sound the function of his spiritual ear is re-awakened and the enlightened soul is then fit to serve the Name by his opened spiritual ear by the method of submissive spiritual hearing.

It is, therefore, necessary to submit to hear the Holy Name from the lips of the *sādhū* on his own conditions. Till this duty is properly performed we can have no access to the plane of the activities of the real devotee. Sankara is silent about all these details which really matter. His so-called followers are as a rule opposed to all spiritual activity. It is our function to introduce the reader to the nature of the spiritual activities of the soul in course of this narrative. Our Hero is Sree Gaur-sundar, the Supreme Lord Himself. He is at once the only Source and the only Object of all worship. We have seen that the Divine Master and Lover appears in Gaur-sundar in the role of His Own Servant and Mistress to teach us how to love Him by making the experience available to us by Himself tasting the Love for Himself.

But up to the point of His Career that has yet been reached, the Lord has not set up openly as Teacher of the Religion. Sree Gaur-sundar, to the eyes of His contemporaries of this world, was as yet no more than a dutiful and learned Brāhmaṇa house-holder, assiduous in the performance of all those duties that ordinarily fall to the lot of a God-fearing Brāhmaṇa. There was as yet nothing unusual or extraordinary about Him. Had His Career terminated at this point He might have been regarded as having confirmed by His Conduct the mode of life led by the Brāhmaṇa house-holders of Nabadwip of that period. We now know that this was by no means His purpose. But His real purpose had not yet been divulged to anyone. That Purpose was not understood, even when it was subsequently fully divulged, by most of His contemporaries.

The reason of such misunderstanding is plain. Sree Gaur-sundar's Life can be understood only if we submit to be spiritually enlightened. Thākur Haridās is the teacher, authorized by Sree Gaur-sundar Himself, from whom we have to learn how in this Iron Age we are to receive spiritual enlightenment. The Purpose of Sree Gaur-sundar is not to teach Personally the method that is to be followed in this Age, by those souls who are in the state of

bondage, for attaining the spiritual life. That function is not directly exercised by Sree Gaurasundar or Sree Krishna. It is the function of Nityānanda, but not even his main or direct function. Nityānanda or Baladeva is the second Self of Sree Krishna (or Gaurasundar) and they represent the Supreme Lord in His Aspect of the Possessor of All-Majesty, All-Power and All-Grandeur. Baladeva is the Source of all service of the Divinity in the outer hemisphere of the transcendental world. It is the indirect function of one of Baladeva's secondary selves to direct the service of the Lord in this lower, phenomenal world. This particular secondary self is styled Mahāvishnu in the Scriptures.

But even Mahāvishnu does not come in direct contact with the material mind or anything mundane. That function is delegated to Vishnu Who is a secondary self of Mahāvishnu. Vishnu Himself also is located outside this mundane world. All the secondary selves of the Supreme Lord, issuing ultimately from Sree Baladeva or Nityānanda, are absolutely spiritual in all their Divine activities.

The connection between the two planes, *viz.*, the spiritual and material, is established by Siva whose nature is most difficult to understand. It is a mixed one being both Divine and non-Divine. Brahmā, the first progenitor of all the creatures of this phenomenal world, is associated with Siva in carrying out the will of Vishnu, Who is the direct Divine Master of this phenomenal world.

It is the object of both Siva and Brahmā, who are the servants of Vishnu, as their highest function to divert the minds of fettered souls to the service of Vishnu. Brahmā appears in the transcendental Pastimes of Sree Gaurasundar in the form of Thākur Haridās who is delegated the function of promulgating the Dispensation of the Age, *viz.*, the chanting of the Name of Krishna. This function which belongs ultimately to Sree Gaurasundar, is exercised directly and fully by Thākur Haridās as his authorized function.

The function thus Divinely Delegated to Thākur Haridās is by no means an unimportant one. It is, on the other hand, the one thing needful not only for souls in the state of bondage but for all souls. It is the only function of all souls who of course

vary in their degree of its realisation. There is no higher function than love for Krishna. Thākur Haridās teaches how the conditioned soul may attain to the love of Krishna in this Age of sophistry by chanting without offence the Holy Name of Krishna. The life of Thākur Haridās presents us with the career of a pure soul who practises the chant of the Holy Name of Krishna without offence. The life of Thākur Haridās at Fuliā, described by Thākur Brindāvandās in a few pregnant words, is for this reason one of the most important parts of the present Narrative in as much as it introduces the reader, if it is rightly understood, to the true meaning of the other parts.

It will be our endeavour to establish, by the grace of Thākur Haridās, the truth of the proposition that the method of chanting the Holy Name of Krishna, in the manner that is free from offence, is the only perfect service of the Lord having the unique quality of being both the means and the object of all spiritual endeavour. As means the Name is accessible to the worst of atheists especially to that stubborn species that belongs to the present Age who are fortified against the spiritual function by all manner of sophistries. Access to the Name is closed to none who are prepared to recognise the Name of Krishna as identical with Krishna Himself and not as a mere passing sound of the mundane atmosphere; and that the Name does not, therefore, manifest Himself on the material tongue of the physical body which cannot serve the Divinity. The Name can be served when He manifests Himself on the spiritual tongue as the Transcendental Divine Sound. The spiritual service is possible only on the Appearance of the Name, in the Form of the Sound, on one's tongue. The Name first Appears to the listening ear of a person who submits to receive Him as He Appears on the lips of a *sādhu*.

The Name of Krishna appearing on the tongue of a *sādhu* as Transcendental Sound is not a figment of the imagination. He is the only Reality, being the Absolute Person Himself. If the Name is served by the method of perfect submission under the direction of a *sādhu*, by such service love for Krishna is obtained. By no other method one may be enabled to realise the love for Krishna. It is for this reason that the Name is the Highest and Only Means.

It is quite in keeping with the conclusions of our un-biased reason that Krishna in His Own Form can also be the only Means of His highest service.

But against this if it be urged that as the Form, Quality, Activity and Servitorship of Krishna are also identical with Krishna how may the Name be regarded as the *only* Means? This is true. But to the soul who happens to be under the thraldom of matter the Name alone is accessible. The Form, Quality, Activity and Servitorship, are attainable in the order of enumeration by the method of taking the Name without offence. This is not against reason because the Holy Name alone is least liable of being wholly misunderstood by the fettered soul who submits to receive Him from the lips of a *sādhu* for the purpose of serving Him in the manner that is free from offence.

It is for this reason that the question as to what constitutes the act of offence against the Name, becomes all-important. The psilanthropists who confound the soul with the material mind necessarily imagine that the Name and the *sādhu* are also phenomena of this world and, therefore, they are as a matter of course comprehensible by the material mind. This attitude of virtual refusal to recognise the Divine Nature of the Holy Name makes the recital of the Name of Krishna by the psilanthropists a meaningless mundane process which bears only an external resemblance to the service of the Holy Name by the devotee. The difference is of course not perceptible to the material mind but it is, and must be, necessarily self-evident to the pure soul who has access to the Substantive Reality.

It is also for this reason that psilanthropists, who profess to be Vaishnavas, suppose that everyone has a right *ab initio* of realising the Form, Quality and Activity of Krishna and his own distinctive relationship to Him as His servitor. On this supposition they engage in gross and sensual idolatry under the persuasion that it is identical with the religion enjoined by the *Shāstras* and sanctioned by the actual practice of the most eminent devotees. From this error, if it has already taken a deep root, it is very difficult to extricate the offending soul. All the gross immoralities that are practised in the name of religion in different parts of the world

by certain classes of people, who are very anxious to keep their activities screened from the view of those who do not belong to their secret brotherhoods, are due to their neglect to chant the Holy Name of Krishna, heard from the lips of a real *sādhu*, in the manner that is free from offence and under the direction of *sādhus*.

The chanting of the Transcendental Name is the only admissible form of religion to fettered souls as He is not capable of being grossly misrepresented. It is of course also possible to chant the Name of Krishna in the offensive manner. But once we are put on our guard against the deliberate commission of such offence we would naturally be unwilling to honour a person as a real *sādhu* unless he fully satisfied, at any rate to our judgment enlightened by the chanting of the Name, this crucial test of sainthood. The offence against the Name is nothing short of wilful misapprehension. We must not understand that the Name or hearing or chanting of the Name is a material phenomenon. We must insist on being fully satisfied that it is not really a material process that is being offered to us by any person wearing the external garb of a *sādhu*. We must always refer to the texts of the Scriptures which uphold the spiritual view in the most uncompromising manner. Thus fortified it should be possible for a sincere soul to detect every form of mischievous attempts of the cheats and hypocrites.

A person has to thank only himself for being a victim to pseudo-*sādhus*. A person is similarly to blame only himself if he fails to find the real *sādhu*, or neglects to seek for him. When once a person attains the condition that entitles him to sing the Name of Krishna in the manner that is free from offence, he finds that all his wants have been automatically fulfilled. For example he is freed from all anxiety on his own personal account. He realises that he is not any limited entity and that he is located beyond the jurisdiction of birth, death and wants. He obtains the vision which is capable of distinguishing between the real and the apparent. But as those, who either belong to a lower level of the spiritual plane or do not belong to the spiritual plane at all, have not his perfect vision, they naturally fail to understand the true bearing of his activities.

The activities of Thākur Haridās can be properly understood only by perfectly self-realised souls. All that we may affirm in regard to them at this place, is that they show an utter forgetfulness of his material surroundings and an over-powering attachment to the Holy Name of Krishna. We have already seen that he was absolutely free from sexual weakness and was thoroughly versed in the principles of the *Shāstras*. The idea regarding the real nature of his personality will be further elucidated by a careful consideration of the different aspects of the event that we are just going to describe.

The Kāzi or Moslem priest under the employ of the State, who was both priest and judge and looked after the Moslem religion, soon began to take an interest in the doings of Thākur Haridās. Being apprised of his antecedents and present behaviour he considered it necessary to bring the matter to the notice of the local Governor. The Kāzi went personally to the Governor and told him everything about Thākur Haridās concluding with the request that as Thākur Haridās was guilty of the offence of living as a Hindu, although he is a Muhammedan born, he should be dealt with in a decisive manner.

The Governor, writes Thākur Brindāvandās, who was himself also of a worldly disposition, on the representations of the misguided Kāzi, ordered Thākur Haridās to be seized and brought before him at once. Haridās voluntarily offered to accompany the men despatched to seize his person by violence and to appear before the Governor. By the Grace of Krishna, Thākur Haridās, says the author of the Chaitanya Bhāgavata, was not afraid of death not to speak of the Moslem ruler. Thākur Haridās, with the chant of the Name of Krishna on his lips, set out immediately and presented himself before the Governor. All the good people of Fulia, apprehending the worst, were filled with sorrow and dismay on being thus suddenly and violently deprived of his happy companionship.

And now an incident occurred which throws much light on the true personality of Thākur Haridās. As soon as the tidings of the seizure of Haridās reached the prison of the Governor, the leading persons of all those parts, who were confined in the

jail at that time, experienced a great joy in the core of their hearts at the news. They thought, writes Thākur Brindāvandās, that as Thākur Haridās was the greatest of Vaishnavas the miseries of their captivity were sure to end by the sight of him. They accordingly persuaded their keepers to afford them an opportunity of obtaining a glimpse of the great devotee as he passed by the prison-house. Those captives awaited the arrival of Thākur Haridās with their eyes fixed to the path by which he was to pass. Thākur Haridās came to the spot and on catching sight of the prisoners he mentally cast the glance of mercy on them. The prisoners fixing their eyes to the feet of Thākur Haridās remained in the posture of obeisance. They saw that Thākur Haridās was surpassingly handsome. His hands reached down to the knee. His eyes were like the lotus flower. His incomparable moonlike face was, however, the most beautiful of all.

All the prisoners bowed with a natural and loyal impulse of submissive devotion. They at once underwent the spiritual perturbations of devotion to Krishna. Lord Haridās noticed the devotional activity of them all and finding that they were in chains broke into a smile of mercy. "May you continue to remain in your present condition," said Thākur Haridās. He began to laugh merrily after pronouncing this veiled benediction. The prisoners failing to comprehend the real meaning, which is, indeed, very difficult to understand, were somewhat depressed on hearing these words.

Haridās Thākur was thereby moved to the mood of pity and at once proceeded to explain clearly the import of his words. 'I have, indeed, conveyed my concealed benediction to you all by means of those words. You feel dejected because you do not understand this. I never bless amiss. You will understand this if you give my words your close consideration. May the minds of all of you remain constantly turned towards Krishna as they actually are just now. May all of you from now jointly chant the Eternal Name of Krishna and think only on Him. There is now no malice, no thought of oppressing any creature, in your hearts. May you meditate on Krishna by taking His Name with all humility. If you go into the world once more you run the risk

of forgetting Him again by mixing with the worldly people. Love for Krishna cannot co-exist with any form of worldliness. Know it for certain that from one who is of a worldly disposition Krishna is always very far off. The mind, that is engrossed with the pursuit of the objects of this world, is a great nuisance. Wife, sons and all worldly objects are the tools of delusion. All these are 'death'. It is by Providential contrivance that any fortunate person gains real contact with the pure devotees of Godhead and, being thereby enabled to give up his attachment for the world, is in a position to devote himself to the service of Krishna. All those offences that are now absent from your minds will once more be committed when you mix with the worldly people. It is the nature of this world. This is the gist of all that you require to be told for your benefit. Give it your most attentive hearing. I pronounced this great benediction which you misunderstood. It is not my desire that you may continue to remain in this state of captivity. Forget the world and take the Name of 'Hari' night and day. I pronounced this only benediction in a disguised form. Feel no dejection, no, not even for a moment. I see all persons who are really in the fetters of this world with the eye of pity. May all of you attain to firm devotion to Krishna. Have no anxiety. I assure you that you will be freed from your captivity in the course of two or three days. Whether you engage in ordinary worldly pursuits, or wherever you be, never forget your present resolve by any means.' Having sought to promote the true well-being of the prisoners in the above manner Thākur Haridās proceeded on his way and duly presented himself before the Governor of the District.

The advice to the prisoners makes the position of Thākur Haridās clearer. It is necessary to chant the Name of Krishna, to mediate on Krishna, instead of being engrossed in worldly pursuits. For this purpose the state of captivity is more favourable than the state of bodily freedom, provided one is really inclined towards Krishna. It is very difficult to remember Krishna in the midst of the thousand and one pre-occupations of the worldly life, Krishna and worldliness having no connection with one another, the two being perfectly incompatible. It is never possible to serve

both. A worldly-minded person can have *nothing* to do with Krishna. It is never possible to worship Krishna in the intervals of worldliness. The slightest inclination to worldliness should be impossible to a person who is at all inclined to Krishna. It is necessary to understand clearly that as long as the least inclination for worldliness persists in our minds there can be *no love* for Krishna. The society of worldly people has this tendency of making us wholly forget Krishna. Wife and children are cited as instances of the deadly traps that are laid by the Delusive Energy for encompassing our ruin. The attachment for wife and children and other worldly objects can be overcome only by association with the *sādhus*. In the company of the *sādhus* our attachments are deflected towards Krishna. Therefore, Haridās properly enough exhorts the prisoners to forget the world completely and chant the Name of Krishna night and day.

The function of the soul, who is anxious to be restored to his natural condition of loving devotion to the Lotus Feet of Krishna, is very simple. One must willingly turn his thoughts and activities towards Krishna. He can do so most naturally by association with the devotees of Krishna. The devotees of Krishna always serve Krishna and do nothing else. By adopting their life under their direction love for Krishna is gradually aroused in the fettered soul. Attachment for the world is automatically dispelled by the dimmest apprehension of such inclination, as darkness is dispelled by the glow of the reflected light that harbingers the approach of Sunrise.

The cultivation of association with the devotees is the only method of attaining to the natural function of the soul, *viz.*, unalloyed love for Krishna. This inclination for the society of *sādhus*, which is inherent in every soul, is liable to be rendered ineffective by association with worldly people. Pure devotees and worldly people and worldly objects generally present themselves simultaneously and claim our service, as rivals. We cannot choose both. If we choose one of them we completely lose sight of the other. They are related to one another as darkness and light. The light of this phenomenal world imperceptibly shades off into darkness, so that it is not possible to fix a line of real demarcation

between the two. But the darkness of the non-spiritual state has a definite line of demarcation. Until this line is passed we can have absolutely no idea of the spiritual state. A better analogue from this point of view is furnished by the case of life and death. Death is not an attenuation of life. It is the complete cessation of life. We cannot have both simultaneously. It is not possible to mix up the two. It is also possible to ascertain perfectly the dividing line between the two. A dying person is a living person to the last moment that he retains his animation in however attenuated a form. When he dies he passes completely out of life. The smallest fraction of a second makes a complete rupture, not merely a graduated difference. A dead man cannot also come into life again.

This is the reason why the acceptance of a person as disciple by the spiritual guide has been called the *second birth*. The seminal birth does *not* give the spiritual life. One is spiritually dead till the *second birth*. One is *born* a third time on receiving the full enlightenment of *dikshā*. The first is the seminal birth, the second is initiation or admission for enlightenment, the third birth is brought about when one attains to the state of actual enlightenment. The first is the condition of spiritual death, the second is the quasi-living state, the third is the normal living condition. One who has any real experience of life and death cannot prefer death to life; neither can he plead for an unnatural and impossible mixture of the two.

We must not suppose that we are asked to accept anything blindly when we are told to accept the life that was actually led by Thākur Haridās. If any one shouts the Name of Krishna three or any number of lakhs of times everyday and abstains from open debauchery or detectable forms of gross worldliness, he cannot thereby mechanically attain to the spiritual plane. It is not mechanical, nor even mental, activities and attitudes, that we are asked to adopt. As soon as the Name of Krishna manifests Himself to our *spiritual* ear we obtain the power of vision that can distinguish between the substance and the shadow. The shadow now no longer stands in the way of our dealings with the substance. Those, who are under the misapprehension that the shadow is

everything and behave and think accordingly, cannot at all understand the ways of the devotee of Godhead.

The very idea of service is incomprehensible to the material mind. The material mind is connected by the relationship of the deluded pseudo-enjoyer to the objects that lie exposed to the physical senses. It misconceives certain forms of such enjoyment to be 'service'. It thinks that its very existence is dependent on and consists of such enjoyment. Therefore, whenever it finds anybody behaving on a different principle it judges him, consistently enough, to be in the wrong and his course as suicidal. While the real Truth is that the judge himself is all the time pursuing the course that leads to death while the *sādhu* has his face eternally turned towards the Life Eternal.

How can one live at all unless one eats and tries to procure food, clothing and shelter? Thākur Haridās also, it is supposed, required all these 'necessaries' of life. Once this is admitted it follows that one must lead the worldly life as a matter of course. But Thākur Haridās says that nothing is *necessary* except taking the Name of Krishna. If he is asked why he himself eats, drinks, sleeps and does other kinds of work in the same way as another person, he simply replies that he does nothing of the kind. The objector may prefer to believe the testimony of his senses and consider Thākur Haridās to be a shameless liar. It is of course, perfectly open to him to do so. But even by disbelieving Haridās he does not establish the Truth of his own contention. All that is proved is that if both of them are assumed to tell the Truth their points of view must be admitted to differ widely. This brings us back to a re-examination of the bases on which they take their respective stand. If we do so without bias we should be impressed by the conviction that the method of Thākur Haridās *may* lead us to the Truth, but the method of the mentalist can *never* do so.

True, we may pretend to stick to that course into which we suppose we have been born by the Will of Godhead. But what right have we to suppose that the phenomena of birth and death themselves may not be as deceptive as any other similar phenomenon? So the question cannot be solved if we choose merely to

stick to the testimony of our deluding senses on the ground that it happens to be so. If it be our fore-gone conclusion to adopt that course which seems more likely to enable us to exploit for our transitory pleasure the questionable so-called facilities offered by this world, we do not admittedly approach the issue for the impartial purpose of finding out the Truth before our conclusion is declared. If by taking the Name of Krishna in the manner that is free from offence the senses themselves are transformed why should it be still necessary for us to obey the dictates of the old, non-spiritual faculties? If I actually can see that it is Godhead Himself Who always feeds and clothes me, why should I still consider it my duty to maintain it is I who feed and clothe myself? If I clearly realise my blunder, why should it still be my duty to stick to it? One, who tries to mechanically imitate Thākur Haridās, without possessing his vision and purpose, should find it impossible and inconvenient to imitate his whole conduct, as will be evident from the incident that we are going to describe just now.

After endeavouring to compass the good of the prisoners Thākur Haridās made his way to the presence of the Governor. The Governor was fascinated by the extraordinary charm and force of personality of Thākur Haridās. He accordingly offered him a seat with the greatest respect. The ruler of the *mulk* himself then questioned him. The questions of the Governor have been preserved by Thākur Brindāvandās in his Account of Sree Chaitanya. The Governor said in effect, 'Brother, what is the cause of this peculiar disposition in you? It is no small good fortune whereby you have been born a Yavana. Why then do you incline to the practices of the Hindus? We don't touch our food if we but chance to see a Hindu. Why do you give up the superiority that accrues to you by your birth in our great race? You behave unnaturally by transgressing against your race and religion. You cannot hope to escape the dire consequences of such gross offence, at any rate in the next world. The malpractices, of which you have been guilty through ignorance, are a sin against Godhead. By all means do get absolved form these heinous offences by uttering the formula (*qalma*) of the faith.'

Thākur Brindāvandās comments on the speech of the Governor as proceeding from a person whose judgment was stupefied by the deluding energy of Godhead. Haridās only burst into a loud laughter. ‘Lo, the Deluding Power of Vishnu!’ said he, and then began to reply in a sweet manner. ‘Listen, dear one, there is only one Godhead and He is the Lord of Everything. It is the mere concocted name that makes all the difference between ‘Hindu’ and ‘Yavana’. The Veda and the Koran alike declare the *summum bonum* to be one and the same for all. The One Eternal Entity, Free from all defect, Indivisible and Indestructible, occupies fully the seat of heart of everyone. All the worlds function exactly in the way in which the One Supreme Lord guides the minds of His servitors. It is the Name and Quality of the Selfsame Lord on Whom all persons discourse in conformity with the declarations of their respective Scriptures. He, Who is Godhead, takes cognisance of the disposition that prompts the utterances of all persons. Whence I am doing exactly that very thing to which Godhead directs my mind. It is analogous to the conduct of a person who, being a Brāhmaṇa and born in the Hindu community, is sometimes found to become a Yavana by his own free choice. What can even being a Hindu avail such a person? The deeds of every person are entirely his own concern. What is the good of killing a person who has himself committed suicide? Good sir, judge my case accordingly. If there be no real lapse on my part, do by all means punish me for my offence’.

These wholesome and true words of Thākur Haridās satisfied all the Yavanas who heard them. There was, however, one solitary exception. An ecclesiastic (*kāzī*), who was a great offender against Godhead, now tendered quite different advice to the Governor. He said to the Governor, ‘Punish this person. This wicked one will lead many others into his folly. He will bring low the *prestige* of the Yavana race. For this reason let him be punished in all seriousness. As an alternative let him recite his own Scriptures’.

On this the Governor spoke once more to Haridās, ‘Dear brother, profess your own *Shāstra* and be relieved of all anxiety. If you do not do so all the ecclesiastics will band together and punish

you. You yourself will also say your own *Shāstra* in the long run. Then what is the good of your choosing to be lowered in the estimation of the people?"

Haridās said, 'No one can do anything else than what Godhead makes him do. Know it as certain that it is Godhead Who awards the punishment that is the fruit of offence committed by ourselves. If my body be hacked to pieces, if life itself desert me, even then I will not give up the Name of Hari.'

The ruler of the place, on hearing his words, put the issue to the ecclesiastics, 'What will you do to him now?' The Moslem ecclesiastic (*kāzī*) gave his verdict, 'Let him be whipped at the twenty-two market-places. Take his life without any hesitation. If he survive the beating at the twenty-two markets then I should be prepared to admit the truth of what the sages have declared.'

I have tried to reproduce the actual wordings of Sree Brindāvandās's account of the famous trial of Thākur Haridās. We should now try to put ourselves into the attitude of the saintly narrator in order to be able to understand the real meaning of his words.

But before we proceed to do so it is necessary to offer a few remarks as regards the canon by which the authenticity of a statement is to be tested. It is not the practice in the conventional history to use the method of direct narration unless the words actually spoken can be reproduced *verbatim*, and even in such case it is very rarely, indeed, that recourse is had to this direct method. In the Biographies of Sree Chaitanya penned by Thākur Brindāvandās and other contemporaries and followers the method of recording the speeches of the actors has been used very frequently and the followers of the Lord accept the version of the Biographies as the actual language used by Sree Chaitanya Himself.

The value of the actual words used by the speaker is even greater in the case of theistic history than in secular narrative. In theistic history only the actual words of the devotees convey the full meaning intended by them. The words are living entities. This is the reason why these authors are so careful to give us the actual words of the devotees whose views they record. In this connection we should remember that the method that is being

followed in the compilation of the present work is not the empiric method of induction-cum-deduction but that of manifestation of the Truth in the Form of the articulated Transcendental Sound. In this method the value of every single word, actually spoken by the devotee, is worth preserving and the original text is therefore all-important.

It is possible for the devotee of Godhead to supply us with the actual words of the Divinity. The slightest deviation from the Divine Language is also for the same reason detectable by the devotee. The language in the form of direct narration is, therefore, not a departure from the Truth in this case, but the closest adherence to Him. In the form of indirect narration the writer's personality is the obtruding and dominating factor. In theistic history the personal equation should be non-existent; and, therefore, its indirect narration should also be acceptable in proportion as it approximates the direct form. This is also the reason why quotations of actual texts are so much esteemed in the theistic method of narration. Sree Jiva Goswāmi Prabhu has tried to clothe his highest conclusions in the language of the Scriptures. The method of Sree Jiva Goswāmi is a part and parcel of his function as the real exponent of the Absolute.

If it be urged why it is necessary also to preserve the actual words of the opponents of the devotees, as has been done in this case, the explanation is that the words of a person, who is adverse to Godhead, when directed to the devotee of Godhead even by way of opposition, do no longer point to the mundane objective and for this reason acquire special value for the instruction of novices. Nothing can purely express one's personality except the words spoken by the person himself. The indirect method of narration is due to the inability of the writer to understand the real character of a person with sufficient distinctness. There need be no categorical distinction between the dramatic or conversational form and that of indirect narration which has found so great favour, by reason of its very insufficiency, in all so-called *serious* compositions of these days. The indirect narration is suitable as medium of expression in the case of inanimate objects or when the narrative is intentionally converted into a monologue. Either of these, if

properly used in place of the other, would be a deviation from the Truth, and would, therefore, be inadmissible, unless required for the purpose of expressing the Truth.

To proceed with our narrative, the issue, that was put before the Governor by the Kāzi and used by him in punishing Thākur Haridās, is by no means so crude and unimportant as it may appear to a moderner to whom religious toleration is supposed to be 'as the very breath of his nostrils'. The Kāzi said that as the Moslem community are upholders of the Truth, Who can be but One, they have a right to convert others to their faith by any method, even by force, for the good of all parties. In case of extreme perversity the true believer has also the benevolent right, on the same principle, of even putting an end to the earthly existence of a person who sets himself in opposition to the Truth, for vindicating the supreme necessity, on the part of all lovers of the Truth, of supporting the cause of the Truth at all costs, to prevent any misunderstanding. If cognisance is to be taken at all of any lapse from the Truth no sentence, that will not maintain the claim of the Truth to our fullest allegiance under all circumstances, can be a true verdict.

Those, who do not profess to be the exclusive servants of the Absolute Truth, need find no difficulty in practising the *duty* of tolerating untruth without losing their self-complaisance. But the real lover of the Absolute cannot hasten to make terms with untruth in order to satisfy the tendency of aversion to Truth that is eternally inherent in the very nature of the dissociable particles of the Divine Essence, *viz.*, the *Jīva* souls. The uncompromising and even violent or impatient opposition of a lover of the Truth to all suggestions of the lower self, who is always whispering into his ears the counsels of disloyalty, may appear to be *intolerable* to one who is complacently disposed towards the pernicious tendency, but should not be justified on this ground by those who are not also themselves disloyal.

Thākur Haridās did not blame the Kāzi and the Governor for their intolerance of untruth but for their hallucination which led them to mistake their own disloyalty to the Truth for the undoubtedly good quality of uncompromising loyalty. Intoler-

ance, said Thākur Haridās, is impossible for one who is really a lover of Godhead. Such a person can naturally blame nobody excepting himself when he finds anything to be wrong. There can be no activity on any plane except by the Will of Godhead. If any activity is blamed or praised it shows the disposition to judge the Doings of Godhead Himself. Any thought against any person is nothing short of malice against Godhead Himself. The Scriptures themselves are also not really different from one another, if they are rightly understood. Those who do not understand their real meaning are alone disposed to differentiate between the Scriptures and revealed forms of worship which are all directed to the One Godhead.

The question of religious toleration is a matter of the highest practical importance. Those who maintain the doctrine of intolerance of untruth can only be properly answered by the higher doctrine of the realisation of the Hand of the Supreme Lord in everything, except in the matter of the individual judgment. The soul can really do no wrong. Godhead is solely responsible for all activities of the world. The soul can be deluded and, in the state of delusion only, he can imagine right and wrong. This deluded condition is full of misery for the soul himself; and for this he should be an object of pity. The deluded soul is, however, deluded also by the Will of Godhead. Therefore, the delusion cannot be blamed. The cause of the deluded state is inherent in the *jīva* soul as the necessary condition of his dissociable individual existence.

It is, no doubt, necessary to get rid of the deluded state. But it is not possible to bring this about by a policy of violence. As soon as one is disposed to be violent he is subjected by his own activity to the delusion that he, or anybody else except Godhead, is responsible for the ordering of this world. And if one persists in acting under such delusion he is himself deluded by his own acts. This is the meaning of the Koran. Those, who imagine that the delusion is cured by putting the unbeliever to death, are themselves deluded. The only way, in which one can help both oneself and others, is by trying to avoid falling under the delusion that anybody except 'Godhead' can do anything, either

good or bad. There is nothing good or bad but our disloyal thinking makes it so.

The policy of real toleration is not inconsistent with, but on the other hand indispensable for, the relation of the true service of Godhead. The toleration, that is disposed to dally with untruth, is inconsistent with loyalty, is really due to aversion to the Truth, and is, therefore, more disastrous in its consequences than intolerance of untruth which it pretends to condemn.

The policy of sincere intolerance of untruth, although it is better than disloyal tolerance of untruth, is thus itself a mischievous delusion. The chaste and loyal wife may consider it her duty not only to cut off the connection with all unchaste women but to revile and punish them for their misconduct. But if those unchaste women could be reclaimed by a policy of milder firmness their husbands would have real cause to thank this loyal wife of another person for her benevolent and really kind disposition. This would certainly be no neglect of her duty towards her own husband.

We crave the kind indulgence of the reader to tolerate an unhappy metaphor to elucidate the position of the loyal servant of Krishna which cannot be fully explained by our defective vocabulary. The unchaste wives, in the case of spiritual service, have really also no other husbands than Krishna. They are, therefore, the co-wives of the loyal matron. It should, therefore, be a duty of the chaste wife towards her Husband to try her best to reclaim the unchaste ladies. If the chaste wife does not do this she is herself proved to be disloyal to her Husband to that extent.

Krishna is not pleased by the malice of loveless fanatics any more than by the covert disloyalty of pseudo-latitudinarians. Fanaticism is due to ignorance of the Perfect Nature of Krishna and of our common relationship with Him. It is also a proof of our want of faith in the Dispensation of the Supreme Lord. It is of course absolutely necessary to keep wholly aloof from all unbelievers in the matter of loyalty to Krishna. But this should be coupled with the desire to benefit the deluded souls by trying to win them over to the service of Krishna.

This duty, as the present episode shows, cannot be neglected with impunity without producing the most tragic results. The fanatical *Kāzī* could dupe those who were maliciously disposed like himself to join with him in practising terrible oppression on a devoted servant of Godhead on the strength of a narrow interpretation of certain texts of the Koran condemnatory of association with unbelievers. Those passages, if rightly understood, are a condemnation of disloyalty to Godhead. But malice towards any creature, as Thākur Haridās took care to point out, is malice against Godhead Himself and such disloyalty is not less condemnable than any of the other more familiar forms of that pernicious tendency.

Loyalty to Krishna necessarily means perfect toleration, nay perfect positive good-will, toward, all creatures good and bad. Nothing less than this can satisfy Krishna. But perfect toleration or good-will towards the misguided soul need not be perversely supposed to mean either toleration or sympathy for the motive that lies behind the conduct of such a person. There can be no toleration of the tendency to untruth. There must be perfect toleration of the activities of misguided persons as Krishna does not cherish any ill-will against them, nay permits those activities with the object of effecting their reclamation thereby. Loyalty to Krishna should express itself by serving the perfect good-will of Krishna towards all creatures and realising the Mercy of Godhead in the activities, as distinct from the motive, of even those persons who are most averse to Krishna. Those, who find fault with the activities of unbelievers from malice, forget that those activities are possible only by the Sanction of Krishna and that by one's malicious opposition of those activities it is Krishna against Whom our malice is really directed. That this must be so is proved by the fiendish persecution that was now launched against Thākur Haridās.

Therefore, the excuse that, as it is not possible to distinguish between a believer and unbeliever except by conduct and profession and as it is our duty to Krishna to discourage disloyalty to Him by all means in our power, the persecution of Haridās can be defended as being due to a strong sense of loyalty to Godhead,

is wholly untenable. Krishna can be properly served only when we possess the knowledge of His Real Nature. Krishna does not want us to discourage disloyalty to Him by hypocritically or maliciously opposing His wise and benevolent method for the reclamation of disloyal persons. In other words, fanaticism is the result of culpable ignorance due to a radically disloyal and unserving disposition. Recourse to violence, either physical, mental or spiritual, is directly opposed to the Purpose of Krishna, because violence is powerless against the soul who, being the essence of Krishna, possesses His perfect freedom of will. The freedom of will of the soul is indestructible. He can be reclaimed only by an appeal to his judgment and free will. Those, who advocate the policy of violence, are far away from Krishna and perfectly ignorant of the nature of their own selves.

Faith in Krishna is the natural attitude of the pure soul. Fanaticism is the hypocritical and malicious caricature of spiritual faith by the soul in the state of utter delusion. Fanaticism, being essentially an attitude of opposition to Krishna, is also necessarily intolerant of all loyal servants of the Supreme Lord. It is not by accident that the fanatics crucified Jesus. The fanatics can never tolerate the good-will of Krishna towards all His creatures. They pretend to show their love (?) for Krishna by hating His loved ones.

The fanatics are bound to hate everybody because they really hate the Supreme Lord Himself. They, therefore, also hate those who are averse to Krishna, not from a sense of loyalty to Krishna but, because they themselves are unmindful of the service of Krishna and want everybody to serve them. Fanaticism always kindles counter-fanaticism in those of its victims who happen to be equally averse to Krishna. But it is powerless to move the servant of Godhead to thoughts of malice against his deluded oppressors.

By command of the Governor wicked ruffians laid violent hands on Thākur Haridās. They beat him most ferociously from market to market to put an end to the least sign of life. Hari-dās remembered to repeat the Name of Krishna. There was no manifestation of bodily pain by the bliss of the Name. All

good men experienced boundless grief on witnessing the utmost severity of the beating that was inflicted on the person of Haridās. Some apprehended the ruin of the whole kingdom from such treatment of a good person in view of the people. Others openly expressed their indignation against King and Minister. There was some display of actual violent opposition also. Intimidation was combined with the offer of bribes to soften the harshness of those ruffians. But all was to no purpose. They beat him severely from market to market. Haridās did not experience the least bodily pain by the Grace of Krishna, even under such ferocious castigation. Thākur Brindāvandās compares his condition to that of the great devotee, the child Prahlāda, who passed unscathed through all hurt inflicted by the atheists (*asuras*). The writer assures his readers that inasmuch as one, who remembers Haridās, is thereby delivered completely from the possibility of all bodily pain, it is no wonder that Haridās himself was also perfectly immune from all such pain on this occasion.

Those, who suppose that the above is the exaggerated version of a petty incident, or may be disposed to minimize or explain away its real significance, are perfectly free to do so. It is not also impossible to adduce instances of the marvellous powers of endurance of the worst of criminals under deserved chastisement. The story of Prahlāda may itself be dismissed as a concoction of the fertile imagination of writers who find a senile pleasure only in praising deeds of transcendental performances. The sedulous cultivation of a taste for the super-natural is also supposed to be that unfortunate trait in the Indian character that distinguishes the Hindus even in the twentieth century from the saner peoples of every other part of the world. It is for this reason that foreign writers, who are really well-disposed towards the Indians, find themselves at the end of their resources to invent a suitable apology for this favourite defect of the narrators of the Indian spiritual traditions that are cherished with the utmost tenacity and reverence by this strange people.

If instead of allowing ourselves to be obsessed by our indigenous or foreign prejudices we stop to consider seriously the version of the event from the pen of the contemporaneous

writer in order to arrive at the truth that he is anxious to impress on our minds we should not fail to be struck by certain very remarkable points in the above narrative. In the first place it is evidently not the intention of the writer to arouse animosity against the Yavanas. Had this been his real object he would not have taken the trouble of insisting on the point that Haridās actually suffered no pain. Neither could it also be the object of the writer to praise Haridās for his courage or power of endurance. In fact he does not want to praise any worldly merit or condemn any worldly demerit. He is wholly indifferent to such issues which alone possess any interest for the secular historian.

Thākur Brindāvandās is trying to understand the experiences of Haridās in terms of his own. What he means to say in effect is this: 'I, who have been immune from all bodily pain by the mere recollection of Haridās, am in a position to testify to the fact that neither he nor Prahlāda can ever really be subject to bodily pain'. So it is necessary to understand what the writer really means. If it be asked why others are not similarly relieved of their sufferings by the mere recollection of Haridās? Why were not those people, who had an opportunity of actually witnessing all these events, instantly relieved of all anxiety on his account by the very sight of him, which should not be regarded as less than recollection?

Thākur Brindāvandās could realise that the devotee of Krishna is not a convict who is put in the prison of this world of three dimensions like ordinary worldly people. The difficulties of three dimensions are automatically solved on the plane of four dimensions although this may pass the understanding of those who are privileged to have a view of events on the plane of four dimensions from their platform of three dimensions without being able to dive into their real meaning. By taking the Name of Krishna one is relieved from all worldly sufferings. If one chooses to stick to his platform of three dimensions he cannot, merely by uttering the word Krishna, avoid the sufferings of this world. The sufferings of the body are a part and parcel of the phenomenal world. The soul does not belong to the phenomenal world and is, therefore, not subject to bodily sufferings. This is logical. But how

can this be actually realised in practice? It can be realised in this world by only one method, *viz.*, by uttering constantly the spiritual Name of Krishna. This is Divinely ordained as there cannot be any mere *logical* way out of this insuperable *difficulty*.

The devotee of Krishna is relieved from all bodily and mental suffering by the realisation of his natural condition, *viz.*, that of the soul. The tree is to be judged by its fruit. If by uttering the Name of Krishna one is not wholly relieved from all worldly trouble he cannot claim to have succeeded in taking the Holy Name. It is only the pure soul who can really utter the Name of Krishna. It is only by uttering the Name of Krishna, by listening to the same from the lips of a devotee, that one can attain to one's natural spiritual condition when alone he is fit to take the Name of Krishna. It is only by getting out of the sphere of three dimensions or any dimensions that all unwholesomeness can be finally, logically and naturally eliminated.

Those, who pray to Godhead to give them the power of endurance under trial, commit a great blunder. Those, who pray to be permitted to serve Godhead on the plane of the Absolute by His causeless grace, alone pray truly. Prayer means unconditional reliance on the Grace of Godhead. The Grace of Godhead is perfectly wholesome and need not be reminded of our wrong aspirations by the method of selfish, criminal insistence for their dire fulfilment. Those who pray in order to gain any object of their present ambition, do not pray at all in the Scriptural sense. The Grace of Godhead will revolutionize our limited outlook and impart other ambitions than those that are giving us such interminable and unrelievable trouble.

Those ruffians and on-lookers, who were interested in the fate of Haridās, were all of them equally misguided in supposing that a devotee is subject to bodily sufferings like themselves. It is to prove by his teaching as well as conduct that he is not subject to any worldly suffering, that Thākur Haridās was displaying those activities in order to induce them to believe in the absolute Truth of what he taught. He, who has himself attained to real immunity from all suffering, is the proper person to be approached as a teacher of the true method for attaining to the

free state. Those ruffians and on-lookers were apparently innocent of any such purpose, except a very few who were led to reflect seriously on the real meaning *for themselves* of those events.

So the mere sight of a Vaishnava under the impression that he is only a mortal, or the mere recollection of a Vaishnava viewed as a mortal, are properly speaking not seeing or recollecting him at all. The Vaishnava can be really seen and recollected only on the plane of the Absolute by the pure eye of faith possessed by the soul in the state of Grace. The recollection of such a sight has the efficacy of freeing from all difficulties. The endeavour to attain such sight and recollection is the spiritual practice available to the novice by the grace of the spiritual teacher. The process of spiritual novitiate under a pure devotee is not ignored by the words of Thākur Brindāvandās. The novitiate itself being also spiritual in character cannot be attained in this Iron Age except by the method of perfect submission to the teachings of Thākur Haridās and of those who are privileged to see as well as remember him as he really is. He is the Āchāryya of this Age of Evil. By following his teaching and practice one can be easily freed from every difficulty. There is *no* other way of our final and true liberation.

CHAPTER XXI

THĀKUR HARIDĀS—(*Contd.*)

THĀKUR Haridās experienced only one kind of pain while he was undergoing ferocious beating at the hands of the minions of the Moslem Governor. He felt sorry for those sinners who were involved in this terrible offence against himself. He prayed to Krishna to do him this Favour that those miscreants might not incur the Divine Displeasure by reason of their ferocious cruelty towards himself.

Those Yavanas, however, continued to beat him severely from market-place to market-place with the resolve of putting an end to his life. They beat him with all the strength they had. Haridās had no memory of his mental body and was perfectly immune from any sensation of suffering which was actually inflicted on his physical body. Neither did he die. The Yavanas now experienced a sense of surprise in their minds. They thought in this way, ‘Can the life of a mortal survive such beating? The life of a man is extinguished by beating at two, or at most three, market-places. We have already beat him at no less than twenty-two market-places. Not only does he not die, but, the wonder of all wonders, he actually smiles now and then. All of them were filled with a terrible misgiving. ‘Was this person after all the Pir that people claim him to be?’

At last the Yavanas put their own plight before Thākur Haridās. They said, ‘Haridās, you will be the cause of the death of all of us. We have beaten you to the best of our ability. But although we are fatigued to death by our severe exertions life still refuses to quit your body. It will now be the turn of the Kāzī to punish us. He will take the lives of all of us.’

This pathetic and strange protest made Thākur Haridās laugh, as he said, ‘If my being alive be the cause of mishap to all of you,

mark me well, I will die *just now* before your eyes'. Saying so Thākur Haridās became absorbed in the contemplation of Krishna. Haridās, observes Thākur Brindāvandās, is possessed of all power. He became perfectly inert and there was no sign of the breathing activity in any part of his body.

The sight of this phenomenon filled the Yavanas with great astonishment. They conveyed Thākur Haridās to the steps of the entrance of the Governor's residence. The Governor then gave the command, 'Let him have a burial'. The Kāzi opposed. He said, 'He will fare well after death if he is given the benefit of burial. Being born in a superior faith he stooped to accept a low creed. He should be dealt with in accordance with the gravity of the offence. It will benefit his soul if his body is allowed a burial. Let his body be, therefore, cast into the river so that he may be doomed to eternal misery.'

At these words of the Kāzi all the Yavanas caught hold of the body of Thākur Haridās with intent to cast him into the Ganges. Thākur Haridās now sat upright in the bliss of Divine contemplation and as he did so Viswambhar, Who upholds the whole world, manifested His Presence in his body. The Presence of Viswambhar made it out of the question for any one to move the body of Thākur Haridās. Mighty men pushed the body from every side. Lord Haridās remained immovable like a great tower. Haridās had been perfectly immersed in the deep nectarine Ocean of Krishna-bliss and there had been no manifestation of any external consciousness. Haridās had not known whether he was on dry ground, in the air above the ground or in the water of the Ganges. The devotion to Krishna, manifested in the recollection of Krishna by Prahlada, is the only parallel to that of Thākur Haridās. Thākur Haridās's conduct is also comparable to that of Hanumān, the servant of Sree Rāmachandra, who submitted to be fettered by the Rākshashas of his own accord, out of deference to Brahmā. It is in the like spirit that Haridās accepted the beating of the Yavanas, for the instruction of the world. That teaching is to be found in his words, 'If my sufferings know no end, if life itself leaves my body, yet will I not give up uttering the Name of Hari with my mouth.' This constant

loyalty to the Name is the teaching of this most wonderful exhibition of devotion by Thākur Haridās. Is it otherwise possible for any one to attempt any harm against Haridās whose Protector is Govinda Himself? All suffering is instantly ended by the recollection of Thākur Haridās. How can, therefore, any suffering be inflicted on Haridās himself? Let no one doubt that Haridās is verily the Iswara (Divine Ruler) of the world, one of the foremost of the greatest associates of Chaitanya-Chandra Himself.

Then Thākur Haridās exhibited the *leela* of being cast into the water of the Ganges by the Yavanas and lay afloat on the bosom of the holy stream. By the Will of Godhead Thākur Haridās soon regained his external consciousness. He then came out of the water and got to the bank of the river experiencing all the while the fulness of the transcendental bliss. In that manner he came on to the town of Fulīā continuing to chant loudly the Name of Krishna.

The Yavanas, as they witnessed this wonderful exhibition of his power, were cured of their malice against him and their minds were purified. All bowed to him with humility, being convinced that he was, indeed, the Pir. All these Yavanas thus received their deliverance. When Thākur Haridās recovered his external consciousness he found the Moslem Governor in presence of him. This made Thākur Haridās smile as he was moved to mercy. The Governor reverentially responded, with palms joined in the act of supplication, ‘I now know most certainly that you are a great Pir. You have realised the knowledge of the One. People claim to be in touch with the Supreme Soul, to possess the knowledge of Him. But they only use their mouths to utter empty words. You have alone attained the realisation in very truth. I have personally come down here to have a sight of you. Have mercy on me, great one. May you be pleased to forgive all my offences. All are equal in your sight. You have neither friend nor foe. There is no person in all the three worlds who can know what you are. May you proceed auspiciously anywhere of your own free choice and continue to stay in your solitary cell on the bank of the Ganges. You may abide at whatever place you choose and do whatever you like at your own sweet will.’

Commenting on this change of heart of his oppressors Thākur Brindāvandās observes that if even those Yavana miscreants could forget their animosity at the sight of the holy feet of Thākur Haridās what to speak of those people who are endowed with a natural goodness of disposition? The change of heart was, indeed, quite marvellous. Those Yavanas had come forward in the greatest anger to beat him to death. They recognised him as Pir and threw themselves at his feet in the end. Thākur Haridās bestowed on the Yavanas his glance of mercy as he came on to Fuliā.

Thākur Haridās now presented himself again to the assembly of the Brāhmaṇas of Fuliā, in the act of chanting the Name of Hari with a loud voice. As they caught sight of Thākur Haridās, those Brāhmaṇas of Fuliā experienced in their minds the bliss that transcends all joys of this world. Those Brāhmaṇas spontaneously burst into chanting the Name of Hari. Haridās danced with joy in their midst.

The spiritual perturbations of Haridās pass all attempt at description. There were manifest tears, shivering, laughter, swooning, horripilation, thundering ejaculation. Haridās would often tumble down headlong on the ground by the melting quality of the liquid mellowness of love. The Brāhmaṇas swam on the current of a great joy on seeing these edifying exhibitions of love. As Haridās became quiet and sat still after a while the Brāhmaṇas also seated themselves in a circle round him.

Haridās then spoke these words to the Brāhmaṇas, ‘O ye Brāhmaṇas, cherish no sorrow on my account. This has been condign punishment for me who have heard endless blasphemy against the Lord. It has been all very well, indeed. It has been a source of very great satisfaction to me that the Lord has been pleased to pardon a great offence by awarding such light punishment. One is doomed to the sufferings of the lowest Hell by the offence of listening to blasphemy against Vishnu. With my vile ears I have heard a good deal of the same. The Lord has awarded the just punishment for that offence, so that it may not be committed by me again.’ In this manner Haridās passed the time in the company of those Brāhmaṇas in the great joy of the

congregational chant of Hari. While all those Yavanas, who had given him pain, were utterly ruined. They were destroyed with their families in a short time.

Haridās now lived in his cell in the bank of the Ganges. He lived in seclusion by constant recollection of Krishna. He took three lakhs of the Holy Name everyday. The cave became to him even as the realm of Vaikunṭha. Inside that cave there also lived a huge serpent. The extremely venomous quality of its poison vitiated the atmosphere of the cave so that no one could bear the burning sensation that was experienced on entering the cave. None of those, who came to have a sight of Thākur Haridās, could bear to stay in the cave. They all felt the burning effect of the most virulent poison. But Haridās on his part was not aware of it at all. All those Brāhmaṇas then met together and talked about it among themselves. They could not understand why there was such a great burning sensation in the cell of Haridās.

There lived in Fulīā persons who were skilled in the treatment of poisoning by snake-bite. They made the discovery that the sensation was due to the presence of some extremely venomous snake within the cave. They informed the people about it and said that it was advisable for Thākur Haridas to quit the cave without delay and shift to some safe place. Accordingly the people went up to Thākur Haridās and implored him earnestly to leave that cave. But Thākur Haridās said that 'he did not experience any inconvenience personally, although he had been there for a very long time. However, if they really felt it to be unbearable he was willing to move out of the cave the next day if the serpent did not shift elsewhere by that time, provided he was there at all,' adding, 'that there was, however, no cause for any anxiety,' and bade them to proceed with Krishna talk.

As the people continued their auspicious discourse about Krishna a most wonderful event came to pass then and there. On hearing that Haridās was to leave the cave the great serpent at once quitted his abode. In the approaching gloom of that very evening the huge reptile came out of its hole and moved off from the cell in the view of all the people. It was a most beautiful

creature, most wonderful to see and most deadly, spotted with yellow, blue, and white. A great gem burnt on the top of its hood. The Brāhmaṇas were struck with a great fear at the sight of the serpent and involuntarily recollected the Name of Krishna. As the serpent left the place there was no longer any trace of the burning sensation that its presence had caused.

The Brāhmaṇas felt a great joy on being relieved of the presence of the brute in that wonderful manner. They conceived a great regard for Thākura Haridās on witnessing this exhibition of his great power. It is a small proof of the power of Thākura Haridās that the huge snake left the place at his mere word. By the very sight of Thākura Haridās the bondage of Ne-science is snapped at once. Krishna does not oppose the word of Thākura Haridās.

The above incident is recorded in the work of Thākura Brindāvandās. Another story regarding the greatness of Thākura Haridās is also recorded by the same writer. It runs as follows:—

One day at the residence of a wealthy person of Fulīā a certain snake-bite healer was performing a musical dance when Thākura Haridās arrived there by accident and stood on one side to witness the dance. There now appeared the Prince of the Nāgas, by the force of the *Mantra* taking its effect, in the person of the dancing snake-bite healer and began to dance in that human form. He sang in a loud key the moving song of pity of the Dance that was enacted by the Lord of dancers in the Lake of Kāliya. On hearing the Song of Glory of his own Lord, Haridās fell down in a swoon and there was no sign of breath in any part of his body. Regaining his consciousness in a short time he gave expression to his joy in thundering ejaculations and began to dance rapturously in an infinite variety of figures.

The snake-bite healer on beholding the spiritual possession of Thākura Haridās stood still on one side of the arena. Thākura Haridās rolled on the ground decked in the wonderful manifestations of tears, horripilation and shivering. The great Thākura Haridās was filled with the Presence of Krishna by listening to the chant of the Goodness of his Lord and burst into weeping.

All the assembled people now sang the chant of Krishna, forming a ring round Haridās. The snake-bite healer looked on from one side with the palms of his hands joined in the attitude of humble supplication.

The spiritual trance of Haridās lasted for a short time. On its termination the snake-bite healer resumed his dance. All the people were filled with great joy by witnessing the trance of Thākur Haridās. All the people now began to rub their bodies with the dust of every place that was touched by the feet of Thākur Haridās.

There happened to be present in that crowd a hypocritical Brāhmaṇa who now conceived the fancy of performing a similar dance, under the impression that ‘foolish uncivilized people evince the highest devotion for even an insignificant person if he but dances.’ As soon as this thought flashed across the brain of this Brāhmaṇa he forthwith fell prostrate on the ground and appeared as if bereft of all power of movement. But no sooner did he fall in this manner inside the arena of the performance of the dance of the snake-bite healer than the latter at once began to beat him violently in a frenzy of anger. He began to beat him so ferociously on the head and shoulders and on all sides of his body with his big cane that the Brāhmaṇa was in imminent danger of being killed outright by the violence of his repeated blows. The Brāhmaṇa, groaning with pain under the merciless caning, fled from the spot screaming ‘Oh father!’ Thereafter the snake-bite healer danced for a long while feeling all along a great delight.

This strange conduct of the snake-bite healer filled the people with a great curiosity. With palms joined in supplication they begged the snake-bite healer to tell them the cause of his unnatural behaviour. ‘Tell us why,’ they asked, ‘you beat this Brāhmaṇa, and stood with your palms joined while Haridās danced. We wish to hear all about it from your own lips.’

Thereupon the Nāga, devotee of Vishnu, began to speak as follows, through the mouth of that snake-bite healer. ‘What you have asked is, indeed, a great mystery and one that is not to be divulged. Yet I will assuredly tell you about the same. On

beholding the spiritual trance of Thākur Haridās all of you showed in a special manner your great devotion towards him. This Brāhmaṇa watched your conduct and through sheer malice tumbled on the ground to make a hypocritical display of devotion. But no one has power to disturb the joy of my dance by any malicious performance. Inasmuch as he falsely set himself up to caricature the devotional perturbations of Haridās I have inflicted this severe punishment on him. The idea by which this wicked Brāhmaṇa was led to act the part of a hypocrite was that people might be thereby deceived to honour him as a great personage. His only object was self-advertisement by means of an exhibition of seemingly pious activity. Such arrogant people have no love for Krishna. One may obtain the devotional aptitude to Krishna if only one is perfectly free from all desire to deceive. You have witnessed the dance of Haridās. Those, who have the good fortune of ever beholding *his* dance, are wholly relieved from the bondage of the world. Krishna Himself dances when Haridās dances. The whole world is sanctified by the sight of his dance. He is, indeed, deservedly named 'the servant of Hari'. Krishnachandra eternally dwells in his heart. He is a lover of every entity, is the benefactor of all, appearing in the Company of the Lord Himself in every birth. He is free from offence against Vishnu and the Vaishnavas. His vision does not stray to the wrong path even in sleep. The soul, who finds his company for the fraction of a moment, verily gains the Refuge of the Lotus Feet of Krishna. The highest souls such as Brahmā, Shiva, etc., experience a great exultation of heart if they chance to be favoured by the company of a devotee like Haridās. He has appeared in an inferior race in order to prove the utter worthlessness of birth and lineage for the purpose of worshipping Krishna. All the Scriptures declare that if the devotee of Vishnu makes his appearance in the lowest of families he is still the only person who is fit to be honoured. If one, who is born of the highest lineage, do not serve Krishna, he is doomed to perdition, his high birth being of no avail. In order to bear testimony to the truth of those declarations of the Veda Haridās appeared in a family of the lowest social standing. Just as Prahlāda is a demon, Hanumān

a monkey, so is Haridās a low-born person, only in name. The celestials covet the touch of Haridās. The Ganges herself desires the immersion of Haridās in her sacred stream. It is not necessary to touch but only to have a sight of Haridās, to be relieved for good from the bondage of the eternal chain of one's fruitive activities. If I go on speaking for hundreds of years it would not be possible for me to reach the limit of his greatness. You are most fortunate. It is for the sake of such as you that this imperfect account of his glory has manifested itself on my lips. He, who takes the name of Haridās only once, will assuredly attain to the Realm of Krishna.' The King of the Nāgas lapsed into silence after delivering the above discourse. The good people were satisfied on hearing this wonderful speech. The great Nāga, who is the eternal devotee of Vishnu, made known in this manner the nature of the spiritual perturbations of Haridās. All people were already well-disposed towards Thākur Haridās. They were most highly delighted on learning these things about him from the mouth of the Nāga.

These performances of Thākur Haridās may be ordinarily supposed to belong to the class of events that are called miracles in the theology of certain creeds. But they are not supernatural occurrences in the sense of being immune from the operation of the laws of physical Nature for no other reason than that they are the performances of possessors of superior power. Like his immunity from physical and mental suffering under severe castigation at the hands of the Yavanas, the conduct of Haridās towards the serpent, his dance, perturbations and trances are only expressions of his great love for Krishna. They are justified and explained properly by the laws of spiritual love which transcend, and by transcending fulfil, the imperfect and essentially unwholesome laws of physical Nature.

The cudgelling of the hypocritical Brāhmaṇa is similarly an exhibition of love for Godhead on the part of the snake-bite healer; while the barbarous behaviour of the Yavanas towards Haridās is an act of hatred against the Divinity notwithstanding the Scriptural language in which it was sought to be clothed by

the Kāzī. It is not the external appearance of an act that constitutes its spiritual worth. In the one case an act of apparent cruelty is to be justly regarded as the exhibition of unalloyed devotion to the Truth; in the other case an externally identical act against Thākur Haridās is to be justly condemned as it proceeded from sheer malice and cruelty of disposition. So it is not the external appearance that determines the spiritual quality of an act.

But it is much more difficult to prove, to the satisfaction of atheists, how love for Krishna can be the sole criterion of spiritual activity. Haridās Thākur cares only to act under the impulse of love for Krishna in all situations. It is only for this reason and for no other that his conduct is to be regarded as spiritual. The relation to Krishna is the only condition by which to distinguish spiritual from non-spiritual conduct.

Spiritual conduct is beneficial to the person practising it as well as to those who are in anyway brought within its influence. Any form of conduct, which is devoid of reference to Krishna, is bound to be equally and altogether harmful to all parties concerned. It is this consideration which lifts the activities of the theist above the level of the so-called moral conduct, which is related to a standard of duty towards others independently of the exclusive reference to the Divinity.

The dance, the trance, the horripilation and other perturbations also belong to the category of spiritual activities that are supremely beneficial for all concerned because of their *exclusive* reference to Krishna. If a hungry man is fed by the birds at the command of another person, the latter may be credited with the possession of extraordinary power for removing physical suffering; but such conduct should not, therefore, be called also spiritual, although it may be moral in the empiric, *i.e.*, worldly sense which that term has come to acquire quite wrongly at the hands of empiric exponents of ethical (?) conduct *unconnected with Godhead*. The theistic point of view cannot logically recognise the possibility of any person being really benefited by any activity that has no direct, conscious and sole reference to Godhead.

The conduct of the hypocritical Brāhmaṇa is on a par with that of the Kāzī who ordered that Thākur Haridās should be beaten to death for taking the Name of Hari. Hypocrisy and fanaticism are not far removed from one another as regards genesis. The reference to Krishna may be, and, as a matter of fact, often is, intended to cover a selfish purpose. The Kāzī wanted to punish Haridās for a political and racial reason. The Brāhmaṇa sought his own fame and also to spite Thākur Haridās. These motives have nothing to do with Krishna Who is the Absolute Truth Himself in Whom there can be no scope for malice or narrowness. The apparently harsh conduct of the snake-bite healer towards the hypocritical Brāhmaṇa is an act of mercy, solely because it is prompted by exclusive regard for the servant of Krishna.

If Krishna Himself is conceived in any narrow sense any reference to such false concept of the corrupt brain of man will not also make one's conduct spiritual. Krishna does not owe His Nature to the particular conception of the person who wants to be related to him. There is only one way in which one's relationship with Krishna may be really established, *viz.*, by the resolve of single-hearted devotion to the Truth Absolute combined necessarily with the equally single-hearted resolve to eschew all association with non-Krishna. Any act, that expresses these complementary characteristics, is alone entitled to be designated as spiritual conduct. Partiality for any really narrow conception, by merely calling the same Krishna, will not enable a person to escape the punishment that is due to the enjoyment of non-Krishna, any more than any other form of covert hostility to the Truth.

The kind and forbearing attitude of Thākur Haridās towards the offending Yavanas must not also be praised for its quality of toleration of any form or degree of untruth. Thākur Haridās did not pity the Yavanas for the reason that they were not responsible for their ignorance. Haridās knew that ignorance is really identical with aversion to Krishna, and he had, therefore, no motive to find any excuse for their hostility to Truth. All, that he desired to express, was that his own punishment was fully

deserved and not that the unpardonable aversion to Krishna, that was openly displayed by the Kāzī and his myrmidons, did not deserve to be punished. He was silent on this last point.

Thākur Haridās passed his days in the performance of the chant of the Name till the period when Sree Gaurachandra at last began to manifest His *Leelā* of bestowing loving devotion to Krishna on the people of this world. The world stood in extreme need of the Manifestation of Divine Mercy in His highest perfection. In all parts of the country all the people were altogether lacking in devotion to Vishnu. No one knew that there could be such a thing at all as the *Kirtana* of Krishna. Not only was there no sign of any spirit of devotion to Vishnu in any part of the country but it was the public fashion to ridicule the Vaishnavas. The attitude of hostility and contempt towards the Vaishnavas was universal, there being no exception to the rule. This state of public feeling compelled the Vaishnavas to sing the Name of Sree Krishna by clap of hand only among themselves. Even this modest activity proved too much for the patience of those wicked people. The atheists hurled their invectives against the Vaishnavas, whenever they met one of themselves.

The grievance of those people against the Vaishnavas have been recorded by Thākur Brindāvandās in many passages of his work and we have already referred to them at several places of this Narrative. Here are a few additional samples of the ordinary charges that were brought against the Vaishnavas by their implacable enemies. ‘These Brāhmaṇas will bring ruin upon the country’. ‘These Brāhmaṇas resort to various devices in the shape of singing the Name with excessive display of sentimentality, in order only to live by begging’. ‘The Lord sleeps during the four months of the rainy season. Is it meet to call upon Him with a loud voice at all time? If the sleep of the Lord is broken by their noise He will be most angry and afflict the country with famine. There can be no doubt of this.’ There were not a few who said, ‘If the price of paddy is found to increase ever so little we will make our fists familiar with the shoulders of these miscreants’. Some opined that it is indeed fit to chant loudly the Name of Govinda by keeping awake during the night of the

eleventh day of the lunar fortnight. What is the use of uttering the Name everyday?' This was the utmost concession that the best disposed people of the society were prepared to make to the Vaishnavas, although the people in general did by no means endorse such a policy of undeserved indulgence towards them.

The devotees felt sorely grieved at heart by hearing night and day all these blasphemies, but no one of them ceased to chant loudly the Name of Krishna in the company of the Vaishnavas. Haridās was also filled with sorrow on beholding the absence of any regard for the communion of devotion in the people. Yet Haridās continued to chant his Lord with a loud voice and employed his mouth exclusively to this supreme function. But the loud chant of Hari even by Thākur Haridās proved unbearable to certain extremely wicked sinners.

A certain wicked Brāhmaṇa, who belonged to the village of Harinadi, angrily protested against his practice. 'Haridās,' said he, 'what is this that you are doing? What is the reason of your uttering the Name with such a loud voice? It is enjoined by the religion that the Name is to be taken mentally without being audible. What Scriptures tell you of addressing Godhead by calling upon His Name with a loud voice? By whose teaching is the Name of Hari recited with a loud voice? Let this assembly of the Pandits judge what you have got to say to this.'

Haridās said, 'You are all Pandits and well versed in the Scriptures. You must know very well all the reasons in favour of this method. You are also well aware of the greatness of the Name of Hari. In reply to your question I can only repeat what I have heard from the Pandits such as you are yourselves. If the Name is uttered with a loud voice no offence is committed. On the other hand the excellence of the process is augmented a hundredfold if the Name is uttered with a loud voice. This is declared by the Scriptures. The particular text of the Scriptures I refer to, is as follows,—'by uttering (the Name) with a loud voice the excellance is augmented a hundred-fold.'

The Brāhmaṇa asked, 'What is the reason that the meritorious effect is increased a hundred-fold by uttering the Name with a loud voice?'

Haridās proceeded to explain, 'Listen, revered Sir,' said he, 'the reason of it as given in the Veda and the Bhāgavatam'. All the Scriptures manifested themselves on the holy lips of Thākur Haridās. He was impelled to expound by the joy of Krishna-bliss. 'Hear, O Bipra,' said Thākur Haridās, 'by listening to the Name of Krishna, only once, beasts, birds and insects find unobstructed passage to the Holy Realm of Vaikuntha. Here is my text. 'What is the wonder of the brute (serpent) being delivered by the touch of the Feet of Krishna, by the taking of Whose Name the person uttering the same is at once sanctified along with all those who listen to him?' The beasts, birds, insects, etc., cannot utter the Name of Hari. They are saved as soon as they chance to hear the Name. If the Name of Sree Krishna is taken mentally only the person taking the Holy Name is saved thereby. By chanting the Name with a loud voice the chanter benefits others also. It is for this reason that all the Scriptures declare that the good is augmented a hundred-fold if the Name is chanted with a loud voice. The text of the Bhāgavatam is as follows, 'It is, indeed, fit that the chanter of the Name of Hari with a loud voice is a hundred times better than one who takes the Name mentally. The person, who takes the Name mentally, saves only himself, one, who chants the Name with a loud voice, saves also his hearers.'

So by the authority of the Purana I hold that one, who chants the Name with a loud voice, is a hundred times superior to him who does so mentally. The reason of this, O Bipra, also deserves to be listened to most attentively. By mentally taking the Name a person maintains only himself. If one chant the Name of Govinda with a loud voice every creature is delivered as soon as he hears. All animals, with the sole exception of man, although they are privileged to possess a tongue, are unable to utter the Sound of the Name of Krishna. The process, by which even those, who are born in vain, are saved, certainly does not deserve to be condemned. There are those who maintain thousands besides themselves. Which of them is superior? This is easy to find by a tittle of reflection. It is for this reason that the superior merit of the process of chanting the Name with a loud voice is held to be well established.'

The reply of Thākur Haridās only served to augment the anger of that wicked Brāhmaṇa who now threw off the mask of the hypocritical enquirer and began openly to revile Thākur Haridās. He said, 'Haridās has at last become the maker of our Philosophy! So the path of the Veda is going to be destroyed before our very eyes after enduring through the Ages. It is said that the Sudra is destined to expound the Veda towards the close of the Iron Age. That thing has come to pass at this very moment, without our having to wait for the end of the Yuga. I can now see what it really is. You go about from door to door feeding on the choicest delicacies by this capital method of cheap self-advertisement. If the explanation thou hast offered is proved to be wide of the mark thy nose and ear require to be chopped off on the spot.'

On hearing these blasphemous effusions of that wretch of a Brāhmaṇa, Thākur Haridās smiled slightly as he uttered the Name of Hari. Without making any further reply Haridās left the place continuing to chant the Name of Hari with a loud voice. Those, who happened to be present in the assembly, were also sinful persons and, being of an evil disposition, made no proper answer to what was said by that Brāhmaṇa. All these Brāhmaṇas, observes Thākur Brindāvandās, are verily cannibals (*Rakshasas*). They are Brāhmaṇas only in name. All of them are proper objects of punishment by Yama. In the Kali Yuga all the *Rākshasas* are ordained to be born in the families of the Brāhmaṇas for venting their spite against the good people. 'The *Rākshasas*, under the fostering care of Kali, are born in the womb of Brāhmaṇas. They oppress the few who really possess the knowledge of the Vedas.' The Dharma-Shāstra, indeed, forbids to touch, hold talk with or bow to these Brāhmaṇas in any circumstances. 'What more need be said. It is incumbent to avoid addressing or touching those Brāhmaṇas, who are non-Vaishnavas, even by mistake.' 'In this world it is one's duty not to see a non-Vaishnava Brāhmaṇa, even as one should avoid the sight of the dog-eating Chandāla. The Vaishnava, although he be born outside the *Varnas*, sanctifies the three worlds. 'If one, born a Brāhmaṇa,

be not a Vaishnava, by even talking with such a person one loses the merits acquired by his previous good deeds.'

I have reproduced the words of Thākur Brindāvandās and also the texts of the Scriptures quoted by him. Thākur Brindāvandās informs us that a terrible calamity overtook the offending Brāhmaṇa only a few days after the above occurrence. The nose of the Brāhmaṇa fell off by an attack of the small-pox. The punishment, which he had proposed for Thākur Haridās, was allotted to himself by Krishna.

We next meet Thākur Haridās in Nabadwip, whither he was attracted by the prospect of the society of the Vaishnavas. He resided there, as the honoured guest of Sree Advaitācharyya, on a footing of intimate friendship with all the devotees.

It is, however, necessary, before we leave this portion of our narrative, to offer a few remarks on an important aspect of the incident just described.

The method of chanting in company the Name of Hari with a loud voice within the hearing of all persons, is the form of worship that was subsequently instituted by Sree Chaitanya as the Dispensation for the present controversial Age. The only offence, which may stand effectively in the way of one's taking the Name of Hari, is absence of faith in the Transcendental Nature of the Name Himself and of Sree Guru on whose lips the Name manifests Himself. Provided one is not deliberately resolved to disbelieve the Divine Nature of the Name and the spiritual nature of His chanter there is no other circumstance that can stand in the way of one's taking the Name mentally or uttering Him with a loud voice. The second of these methods is called *Kirtana*. This is held to be much more efficacious than the mental process.

By taking the Name only once a person is relieved from the bondage of Ne-Science for good. On the manifestation of the natural function of the soul the abnormal function automatically disappears. The *Kirtana* or loud chant of the Name is the only function of the soul in the state of Divine Grace. By His means the whole world is to be saved. This is the Dispensation of this Age.

But this is vehemently objected to by Brāhmaṇas of the stamp of the person who reviled Thākur Haridās at Harinadi. It is necessary to consider the mentality that produces such vehement opposition to a method which should appear even to those who may not have any faith in it, as hardly capable of giving offence to anybody.

No one is likely to be angry with the loud chanter of the Name of Hari unless he is himself accustomed to take the Name in the offensive manner. The rank atheist is less dangerous than the hypocrite. A person takes the Name of Hari mentally, but opposes the loud chant of the Name. What can be the reason of such opposition? It can be but due to the natural partiality for the wrong method to which he has been accustomed, as he must believe, on principle.

But if he is asked further why he takes the Name of Hari even mentally, the opposer of the loud chant should have no reasonable answer to give. The Transcendental *Sound* is the Name of Hari. The Name as *Sound* is identical with Hari. Hari's Name makes His Appearance in this world as *Sound* through the medium of the chanters of the Name. The Name is to be *heard* only from the lips of pure devotees. If He is so heard, even without faith but without offence, the dormant function of the soul is aroused thereby, enabling the hearer also to *chant* the Name. As soon as the Name *appears on the tongue* Hari is fully served. But why should the Name, received from His loud chanter, appearing on the tongue of the hearer, be recited *mentally* in order to prevent others from hearing Him?

The *mantra*, indeed, requires to be repeated to oneself mentally. The *mantra* is also the Name, but not in the form of direct address. The *mantra* is the formula by which the person, repeating the same, makes *a surrender of his mind and its function* to the Name Who is yet inaccessible to the worshipper because of his conditional state. If the Name is compared to the full-blown flower the *mantra* would be comparable to the unopened bud. The *mantra* is the formula for getting rid of the vanity of one's mental existence. The *mantra* helps to clear the way for the Appearance of the Name. The *mantra* involves mental surren-

der to the Guru and is, therefore, a deliberate act of conviction on the part of the person who is entitled to practise this method. The *mantra* in fact represents the special favour of the Guru and the personal relationship between the disciple and the spiritual guide. The imparting of the *mantra* is tantamount to recognition by the Guru that a person is accepted as disciple. This process is called *dikshā* which means the bestowal of spiritual enlightenment by elimination of sinfulness, by the spiritual guide to the disciple who is disposed by sincere conviction to walk in the path of service under Divine Guidance manifested through the Guru.

The chanting of the Name of Hari, after hearing Him from the lips of the pure devotee, in the company of His devotees, is the method of worship that was to be promulgated by Sree Chaitanya as the only Dispensation for the Age. Thākur Haridās is the Āchāryya, or the Divinely Authorised Practising Teacher, of this very function. He is here found to declare that the chanting of the Name with a loud voice is open to all persons and does not require on the part of the neophyte any precondition of fitness except the absence of deliberate opposition to recognising the Name as being identical with the Transcendental Possessor of the Name, *i.e.*, Godhead Himself. If there is no deliberate intention of refusing to acknowledge the Divinity of the Name appearing on the lips of the pure devotee of Krishna a person is eligible to hear and, after hearing, sing the Name in the company of His devotees by discarding all unnecessary association with unbelievers. By practising the chant of the Name in this manner, that is to say by being free from the offences of intimate association with unbelievers and the intention of deliberately cherishing any doubt or disbelief regarding the Divinity of the Holy Name manifesting Himself in the form of the Sound on the lips of pure devotees, a person should be enabled in due course to realise the Divine Nature of the Name, *i.e.*, of Krishna, His service and of his own soul as being the eternal servant of Krishna.

But the *mantra* is not really different from the chant of the Name. It only marks a stage of progress in an identical process. After the Name begins to be chanted in the manner that is free

from offence against the Name, one begins to make progress on the path of spiritual endeavour. The first sign, that actual progress is being made, manifests itself in the form of the conviction that it is necessary to follow unconditionally the guidance of the Guru from whose lips the Name has been heard. This is the specific entry into the properly serving state of the process.

The position may also be explained in another way. The chanting of the Name with a loud voice in the manner that is free from offence is not possible for a person till he is relieved of the exclusively mental outlook on life which is inevitable in the conditioned state. So long as the mental outlook retains its prevailing force a person cannot conscientiously recognise the necessity of unconditional submission to the guidance of the Guru. This is so because he cannot realise by mental speculation the spiritual nature of the personality of the *bona fide* Guru and the consequent necessity of unconditional surrender to the *bona fide* spiritual guide.

It also does not follow that after the *mantra* is received one is not entitled to chant the Name with a loud voice. On the contrary it is the *mantra* who in his turn strengthens the faith of the chanter in the Divinity of the Name by relieving him from the obstructive force of mental speculation regarding the spiritual function. The *mantra* has to be repeated mentally because all persons are not entitled to listen to it nor does it concern any one else except the person to whom it is imparted. The identity between the Name and the *mantra* is established by the fact that the *mantra* is also the Name with the addition of the personal admission that the chanter is convinced that he can be relieved from the state of ignorance regarding the spiritual nature of the Name only by following unconditionally the guidance of the Guru.

It will not do to repeat the *mantra* mentally without receiving the same from the Guru, for the reason that the process would then be meaningless. The *mantra* really means that a person places himself under the unconditional guidance of the Guru in order to realise the spiritual function of chanting the Name of Hari without offence. If there is no Guru whom the person is

to follow there is no meaning in merely uttering a formula which implies one's consent to practise obedience to the Guru.

The Guru understands the particular state of spiritual eligibility of the conditioned soul and is also aware of Krishna's intention in regard to him. He is the channel used by Krishna to convey His Mercy to the conditioned soul. The best of devotees are alone privileged to enjoy this supreme confidence of Krishna. It is the function of the Guru to raise the disciple to the level of the intimate confidence of Krishna, because Krishna is fully served only by the congregational method to be found in the perfectly spiritual community of His pure devotees. The unfortunate Brähmana of Harinadi and the learned Pandits assembled there could not understand the necessity or propriety of chanting the Name of Hari with a loud voice because they were satisfied with their individual mental outlooks and speculative opinions regarding the teaching of the Scriptures, although the same Scriptures are never tired of warning their readers against committing the offence of confounding the spiritual with the physical or mental issue. Those learned Pandits had found the untruth which they were seeking in their lives by precept and example. No sincere seeker of the Truth should, however, allow himself to be deliberately committed to views regarding the worship of Godhead for the purpose of thereby ensuring his own superiority over his fellowmen. Those pseudo-Brähmanas were too fond of the social superiority of their hereditary position to be inclined to pay heed to the real meaning of the Scriptures which is so utterly incompatible with the social privileges, which they so unworthily monopolised. It is seldom that the prosperous and confirmed thief is inclined to pay serious attention to the counsels of stainless honesty.

CHAPTER XXII

PILGRIMAGE TO GAYA AND INITIATION.

NIMAI Pandit continued to teach His students in Nabadwip after His Marriage with Sree Vishnupriyā Devi. The Lord was leading the ideal life of the householder Brāhmaṇa up to this point of our Narrative. It was the life that is enjoined by the Dharma-Shāstras for those who want to lead a life that is not opposed to spiritual well-being. But it is not itself the spiritual life. The life of the Brāhmaṇa is the model for the other classes of the worldly people. It places before us the necessity of not putting one's trust exclusively in the so-called good things of this world. If one has to live in this world, as one must till he finds it really necessary to change his worldly life for one that is higher, he should constantly keep before him the purpose underlying the life of the Brāhmaṇa as laid down in the Scriptures.

It does not mean that every one should embrace the calling of the teacher of religion nor that every one should marry. So long as a person feels any affinity for the activities of this world he should learn a calling that is to his taste and follow the same. Those, who feel a taste for the work of a teacher, have also to qualify themselves for the same by adopting a life that is in keeping with the proper discharge of the responsibilities of that particular worldly calling. The teacher of the people must in the first place lead a life that is in conformity with the interests of his pupils. The highest of all interests is knowledge of the Brahman. One, who is devoid of the knowledge of the Brahman is debarred by this radical disqualification from taking charge of the education of the people.

It is not the purpose of the Scriptures to prevent the proper cultivation of any branch of knowledge by thus making the

Brāhmaṇa the sole custodian of the education of the people. The arrangement recommended by the Śāstras does not recognise the competence of any secular knowledge to free us from the fetters of ignorance, and is, therefore, unwilling to recognise the cultivation of such knowledge for its own sake, and is opposed to the purely secular education which they do not consider to be a beneficial or even harmless pastime. All persons, even those who are engaged in secular pursuits, must possess the spiritual outlook to be enabled to function properly even in those pursuits. The superiority and desideratum of spiritual living in its unadulterated purity must be recognised by being practically imposed on all social institutions.

It must, however, be borne in mind that it is not to a sacerdotal, hereditary caste that the Scriptures intend to bestow the lucrative privilege of the monopoly of a trade of educating the people. Any person, who possesses the genuine disposition to seek for the Truth and who prefers the quest of the Truth to every other consideration, to whatever class of the society he may belong by birth, is to be recognised as a Brāhmaṇa who is fit for this purely spiritual purpose for its own sake. It does not appear that the Scriptures, by means of the *Varnāśrama* organisation, sought to prevent the free choice of secular occupation by individuals. As a matter of fact the object of the institution is just the opposite of this. It requires every individual to be put into the profession that best suits his natural aptitude and to do this at the proper early age. But it also recognised a natural graduation of classes. It considers the position of the spiritual teacher of society as superior to that of all the others. Next below the spiritual teachers it puts the spiritually guided ruling class. Those, who are the leaders of the economic pursuits under spiritual direction, come next below the political body. The fourth estate consists of those who are devoid of spiritual inclination but are prepared to earn a living by loyally serving others who are spiritually disposed.

The peculiarity of the arrangement is that it puts the spiritually enlightened teaching class, carefully recruited from all the classes, at the head of the society, not in the political, nor in the

economic, but in the purely spiritual sense. If a Brāhmaṇa meddles in politics or trade or service, he automatically loses his status as a teacher. As a teacher the Brāhmaṇa is to be maintained by the free gifts of the community to be obtained, not by political pressure but, by begging by the teachers themselves, or their students on their behalf. It is incumbent on the Brāhmaṇa not to amass any wealth but to devote all surplus wealth which may come into his hands in the way that is spiritually beneficial for the Society.

In other words the Brāhmaṇa lives for the purpose of finding the Truth in order to serve Him when found. His life is the probationary stage of spiritual living. The practical result of this obligation, on the part of the teacher, of leading the theistic life enjoined by the Scriptures, would not be objectionable as long as the process of recruitment remains efficient. The Scriptures provide that an unworthy teacher should forfeit his position as a matter of course. The function of degrading such a person belongs to the body of the Brāhmaṇas. We find that the privilege was misunderstood and grossly abused in actual practice. But it would be difficult to suggest that the system itself is, therefore, a defective one. If any society wants to be guided by the instruction of unworthy persons it is always free to do so and to be ruined by choosing to do so. The *Varnāśrama* institution is a secular organisation and as such shares the unavoidable defects of all such institutions. It is claimed to be the only organisation that has been scientifically conceived for the promotion of spiritual living. Unless this is borne in mind it would be difficult to understand what follows.

We have seen that Sree Gaursundar had been leading the life of the ideal Brāhmaṇa householder up till now. The actual mode of life that He led has already been described in different ways. The successful endeavour to live the life of a Brāhmaṇa was now to be rewarded by the attainment of spiritual enlightenment which is the goal to which it is directed.

This is the secondary aspect of the event that we are now going to narrate. The Supreme Lord was induced to manifest His Appearance in this world by being moved to Pity by the

sufferings of His devotees. The Iron Age proved too bad to be redeemed by the exertions of His agents. Even Sree Advaita Āchāryya, Who is the cause of the Appearance of the Lord, had been set at naught by the stubborn atheists of Nabadwip, despite the universal respect in which he was personally held in all the learned circles and among those Brāhmaṇas who occupied the highest social position. In spite of the personal exertions of Advaita and all the devotees who were resident at Nabadwip there was perceptible no change for the better in the attitude of the people towards the Vaishnavas. On the contrary their hostility to the Vaishnavas continued to increase and at last became intolerable. The denunciation of the Vaishnavas by those bad people became the constant and fashionable pastime of the day. The devotees felt the greatest sorrow on beholding the prevalence of such universal preference for false worldly pleasures on the part of the people. The very name of devotion was banned from the category of topics worthy of their serious discussion. Vishnu and the Vaishnavas were, however, constantly reviled by one and all. All this was happening at Nabadwip under the eyes of the Lord Himself Who was all the time absorbed in scholastic pursuits. The grief of His devotees at last moved the Lord to compassion and made Him manifest His Activity of the Saviour.

But before the Supreme Lord openly ranged Himself on the side of His devotees He wished to visit the holy Tirtha of Gayā. For the ostensible purpose of performing the due funeral rites in honour of His deported father the Lord set out for Gayā with many of His disciples. With a mind full of great delight the Lord took leave of His mother and obtained her permission for the journey to Gayā. The Holy Feet of the Lord then began their triumphal progress towards Gayā, sanctifying all the country and the villages wherein the people dwelt, turning them into the holiest of *tirthas*.

The Lord journeyed in the company of His numerous followers in the pleasure of delightful talk on all manner of topics ranging from religion to gossip and hilarious laughter and jocoseness. Travelling for days in this fashion the Lord reached Mandāra and after beholding Sree Madhusudan, Who is

worshipped there, roamed over the Hill to please Himself. But in a few days after the resumption of His journey the Lord manifested the *Leelā* of falling ill by an attack of fever. The Lord was to all appearance smitten with fever, like ordinary men, on His way in the middle of the journey. This filled the hearts of His disciples with great anxiety. They halted on their way and made every effort for having Him cured of the distemper. But the fever obstinately refused to be healed, such being the Will of the Lord. At last the Lord prescribed the proper medicine for Himself, declaring that 'drinking the water that had been used in washing the feet of a Brāhmaṇa relieves from all suffering.' In order to vindicate the greatness of the feet-wash of Brāhmaṇas the Supreme Lord drank the same Himself in the view of all the people. As soon as He had drunk the feet-wash of the Brāhmaṇas the Supreme Lord was instantly restored to the healthy state and the fever left for good.

Thākura Brindāvandās, commenting on the above, says that the Veda and the Purāṇas bear testimony to the fact that it is the Nature of Godhead to drink the feet-wash of Brāhmaṇas and quotes the following from the Geetā. 'I serve every one in the way that he submits to Me. Men, O Pārtha, follow in all cases the lead of My Service.'

The service of Krishna is performed by all the activities of men. All methods of activity come under the category of the service of the Indivisible Knowledge Who is identical with Krishna. If it be asked what constitutes the basic difference between the methods of fruitive activity, seeking to merge in the undifferentiated Brahman and the path of devotion—the only possible modes of activity open to the individual soul—the answer is that the last is the model for the rest. Every one seeks to follow his own inner conviction and light. In proportion as the light within is actually followed it also gives the proper guidance. To one, who chooses to follow the inner guidance only partially, the Light offers only a proportionately partial view of Himself. One, who chooses to neglect Him, is offered a correspondingly deluding view of the Truth and one which he finds more in accordance with his choice. But the Light, Whom all men

serve in different ways, is always the Same Indivisible Knowledge dealing with His votaries in the way that His votaries choose to deal by Him. The difference is, therefore, due to the degree of submission to the Indivisible Knowledge that is actually offered by the individual soul. The doctrine of rebellion against God-head, to explain the origin of sin, is true only in the above sense.

Krishna is found and served only by those who offer their full submission to the Indivisible Truth. When one offers less than his full submission to Krishna he no longer sees Krishna as He is but in an eclipsed form of the Truth corresponding to his own imperfect homage to Him. Indra is also Krishna but only as viewed by the worshipper who covets the pleasure of paradise. Every object of worship to be found in the different creeds, which is offered less than the whole service, is also Krishna in His secondary, *i.e.*, deluding, forms. When the object of worship is not Krishna, or is an eclipsed view of Krishna, the Indivisible Knowledge does not show Himself to the worshipper who experiences in consequence all those difficulties that beset the path of those who do not worship Krishna as He is.

Sree Gaursundar exhibited the Pastime of drinking the feet-wash of Brāhmaṇas and not of non-Brāhmaṇas to signify that Krishna fulfils all requirements of the soul who throws himself wholly on His protection, but He does not deal in the same way with those who are not disposed to serve Him. He is not disposed to accept the service of those who are not disposed to offer Him their whole-hearted service. But He keeps back nothing from His devotee; nay, He uses all His Power in vindicating the pre-eminence of His devotees over those who are not disposed to serve Him fully.

Thākur Brindāvandās goes so far as to assert that the Lord serves those who seek to serve Him in every way by their whole attitude and at all time. The Lord is the servant of His servant. He is subdued by His servant. This is in keeping with what has been stated above. In the battle of Kurukshetra Krishna was compelled by Bhishma to take up arms, thereby breaking His own promise to observe absolute neutrality during the conflict, which had led Duryodhana to prefer to accept the help of Krishna's

army to Krishna's own Person pledged not to fight by actually using His weapons against any party. Bhishma did not consider this policy of Duryodhana, on whose side he had to fight against his own better judgment, to be at all wise; and he told Duryodhana that Krishna was bound to break His promise if He found the Pandavas in real danger. Bhishma was confident of proving his contention as he knew that without the Active Help of Krishna no one could prevail against any one. Krishna could, of course, have easily made the Pandavas prevail over Bhishma without openly breaking His promise or neutrality; but He preferred to be vanquished on this point in order to glorify both Bhishma and Arjuna who were His devotees. Krishna is thus proved to be always ready to obey the wish of His devotee even when it seems to run counter to His Own. There are numerous instances of this kind of Conduct on the part of Godhead in the Purāṇas when He allows Himself to be vanquished by His devotee whenever He is seriously opposed by the latter.

I am perfectly aware that there are persons who have grossly misinterpreted the Shloka of the Geetā, quoted above by Thākur Brindāvandās, and also the conduct of Sree Gaursundar on this occasion. There is a body of opinion among a section of the commentators of the scriptures who are inclined to exploit the passages in the Scriptures expressing the superiority of the Brāhmaṇas into an argument in favour of the unconditional predominance of the hereditary caste of Brāhmaṇas over everything including the Divinity Himself. Sree Gaursundar as well as Sree Krishna are held by these commentators to be upholders of the social and spiritual superiority of the hereditary Brāhmaṇa caste. The point is pushed to the promulgation of the view that those worshippers of Krishna, who are not born in the Brāhmaṇa caste, are rendered inferior to the caste Brāhmaṇas by their not being born in Brāhmaṇa families.

This ridiculous interpretation of the particular passages of the Scriptures, of which an instance is given above, is so obviously sectarian and so utterly opposed to the contexts in which they appear that there should remain at this point of the Narrative no ground for such silly misunderstanding on the part of

those readers who are not pledged to shut their eyes to the Truth out of deference to narrow individual or class prejudices. The true Brāhmaṇa is certainly deserving of universal respect by reason of his disposition for the unconditional service of the Truth. But no one is a Brāhmaṇa who does not serve the Truth in this unreserved manner. The Truth is identical with Viṣṇu. A Brāhmaṇa, who does not serve Viṣṇu, is worse than a Cāndālā whose very sight is to be avoided by all persons. Therefore, it is not the birth that makes the Brāhmaṇa in the sense in which he is to be regarded as the servant of Viṣṇu. It is the test of complete submission to Viṣṇu that is the only consideration. The distinction between one person and another is due to the measure in which he is disposed to serve not a fancy of his erring mind under the name of Truth but the Truth Himself, Who is no other than Viṣṇu. If one does not serve Viṣṇu, i.e., Godhead as He really is, he cannot claim the homage of society by reason of his birth in a Brāhmaṇa family. The community of genuine Brāhmaṇas would also necessarily repudiate all claims of their own social superiority independently of the reference to the service of Viṣṇu which is the one thing needful and is admitted as such in practice by the Brāhmaṇas who follow this real interpretation of the Scriptures and who are recruited from among all classes of the people by this sole test.

The doctrine, that requires unconditional submission to the Feet of Godhead, does not entail any curtailment of our individual liberty to serve the Truth in the way we choose. There is no loss of scope or diversity on the plane of complete submission, but only an increase in the degree and outlook of the faculty of cognition. The very same act is viewed differently from different angles of vision even on the plane of the Absolute, but without causing any loss of Harmony. On the mundane plane there are also the same different angles of vision but they conflict with one another and produce only a temporary and unwholesome result by their diversity. The game is not worth the candle in the latter case.

A person, who is located on the mundane plane, commits the fatal error of looking at everything from a point of view

that is not really his own. This real abandonment of his individuality is wrongly supposed, by mere force of habit, as constituting his proper individual point of view. In this case there is not only a disadvantageous angle of vision, from which the Truth cannot be properly seen, but also a resolve not to see the Truth. Truth can be seen only by the serving disposition. If I choose to look at the Truth from the point of view of the master I am left by the process without any ground to stand upon. This is so because the Truth does not serve any one except Himself. If I choose to look at Truth from the point of view of the master and choose to call this as my individual angle of vision for viewing the Truth, I thereby commit the offence of *suppressio veri* inasmuch as my real intention, in taking up the impossible point of view, is not to see the Truth at all but only a particular hypothetical entity or non-Truth that is made to appear to my view by my own manipulation to miss the sight of the Truth.

The Protection of Godhead in all circumstances is realisable as the basic condition of all rational activity on the part of the individual soul. The devotee is, therefore, under no temptation of seeking to disown the Refuge of the Lotus Feet of Krishna, even if such ambition be permitted a seeming scope by the Absolute Master Himself. The devotee is spontaneously and exclusively attached to the Feet of Krishna not by the need of the preservation of his rational consistency of conduct but by the innate impulse of love. The devotee seeks the Protection of the Lord for the satisfaction of the causeless loving hankering of his pure nature for the service of the All-Beautiful Who is also All-Knowledge and All-Existence. There is, therefore, no plea which need be availed by him for seeking to disown the Protection of the Lord.

After displaying the Pastime of getting cured of the manifestation of fever, the Lord made His way to the holy Tirtha of Poonapoona. Having bathed and worshipped the Pitris (Manes), the Son of Sree Shachi entered Gayā. The Lord, joining His Beautiful Hands, made obeisance to holy Gayā on entering the sacred tirtha, being overcome with spiritual fervour. He then

proceeded to Brahmakunda and, after bathing in its holy water, duly honoured the Pitrīs. Thence He came to Chakrabera and made haste to have the sight of the Lotus Feet of Sree Gadādhara.

The Lord found that the Holy Site of the Lotus Feet was surrounded by the Brāhmaṇas. The garlands, offered to the Lotus Feet, had accumulated to the height of a Temple. The offering made of perfume, flower, incense, lighted lamp, clothing, ornament, was beyond all calculation. The Brāhmaṇas, wearing the beauty of celestials and attending on all sides, were engaged in reciting the Power of the Lotus Feet. “Ye most fortunate people, behold Those Feet That are clasped to his bosom by the lord of Kāshi, That are ever the Life of Lakshmi, That make Themselves manifest on the head of Bali. Behold all ye those Feet by Whose momentary meditation one ceases to be subject to the god of death (Yama). Behold, all ye fortunate people, the Self-same Feet That are so rarely attainable to the highest Yogis, Those Feet in Whom the sanctifying Bhāgirathy makes her appearance Whom the devotee never parts from his heart. Fortunate people, behold Those dearly beloved Feet That repose on the couch of Sree Ananta.”

On hearing of the Power of Those Feet from the lips of the Brāhmaṇas the Lord was overwhelmed by transcendental bliss. His Two Lotus Eyes overflowed with tears. At the sight of the Divine Feet His Person was decked with horripilation and shivering. So did Lord Gaurachandra, for the good fortune of all the worlds, begin the manifestation of loving devotion. The never-ceasing Ganges flowed in the Eyes of the Lord. All the Brāhmaṇas beheld the wonderful sight.

I have tried to preserve the actual words of Thākura Brindāvandās in describing the incident that first excited the manifestation of loving devotion by Sree Gaursundar.

This is the turning point in the Career of the Lord. From this point onwards the Lord Appears as the Ideal Devotee of Godhead. The change to spiritual life when it does come to the Brāhmaṇa householder, comes in the form of the *undeserved* causeless Mercy of Godhead. The Mercy of Godhead is indescribable

to one who has not been the recipient of the same. Had it been describable in terms of worldly experience it would have been more or less deserved.

Those, who seek to understand the spiritual life in terms of mundane values, contradict themselves when they assert with the same breath that Godhead is the judge of right and wrong and is the Dispenser of reward for righteous conduct. If the spiritual enlightenment is a gift for righteous living preceding the gift, can it also be described as causeless or undeserved? Those, who insist that the value of the spiritual life should be intelligible to a person before he accepts it, in order that he may make his choice in the rational way, only commit the mistake of begging the question. If, on the other hand, the value of the spiritual life be admitted on trust without any previous knowledge of its nature, it would be liable to be justly condemned as 'blind faith' that has proved the fruitful source of all the patent corruptions to be found in all parts of the world and which are cherished by their victims under the terrible self-delusion that they only appear to be bad by reason of their very transcendental nature.

The sight of Vishnu's Feet at Gayā gave Sree Gaursundar His first spiritual experience as devotee. The sight of the Feet of the Lord is not available to any one except by the Mercy of the Lord. Why the Lord is Merciful to a person, can never be known. The Supreme Lord is full of Mercy and makes no distinction in bestowing His Favour in boundless measure on all persons. But there is also a process of receiving His Favour which depends on the free choice of the recipient of the Divine Favour. As soon as this condition is fulfilled by the recipient, he is rewarded with the sight of the Feet of the Lord.

If it be contended that a gift, which is conditional on the recipient fulfilling any requirement, cannot be described as either causeless or undeserved, the answer would be that the particular gift fulfils all these contradictory conditions. The gift remains causeless although it is bestowed only on those who fulfil the conditions necessary for qualifying for receiving it. The sole condition is the desire, which is also causeless, of serving the Truth when found. This attitude may be called blind faith so long as

the Truth is yet unfound. But the Truth reveals Himself only to His sincere seeker. There is no cause why He should do so; but, as a matter of fact, He does so. It is the Nature of Truth to do so.

If hydrogen and oxygen combine to form water we are satisfied that we understand how water is formed. If it be asked *why* the two gases should be transformed into water at all, which is altogether a different substance, we are only offered further information on the process itself by way of explanation. We are also not dissatisfied when we get such explanation. This is so because we understand that it is our business not to question the truth of the operations of Nature because they are of the nature of *facts* which exist independently of our speculations regarding them. We are naturally enough only anxious to know more about the actual process of the working of the different forces of Nature. The question of '*Why*' this should be so, *i.e.*, the ethical issue, does not arise at all, in regard to these 'blind' operations of Nature.

But when we are asked to accept the spiritual 'fact' that the sight of the Feet of Hari is capable of producing the disposition for serving the Lord, we are at once impelled to bring up the ethical question *why* this should be so. In regard to such attitude, however, it is important to bear in mind that the ethical question itself is always relative to a standard. That standard is the unknown quantity. The empiricists have been trying in vain to discover the real standard of the ethical instinct. All speculative standards, as yet discovered in terms of mundane values, have proved more or less unsatisfactory and wide of the mark. The only useful purpose, that those speculations have served, is to expose the utter futility of finding the ethical standard by the method of such speculation.

The fun is that this admitted failure notwithstanding the exponents of the so-called Science of ethics do not hesitate to lay down detailed instructions for the guidance of those who are desirous of leading the ethical life. The disciples of this imperfect Science are also in their turn never tired of bragging their

superiority (?) over those who are not acquainted with the conclusions (not errors) of their favourite Science of moral (?) conduct. A certain type of admirers of Christianity are specially fond of trying to prove this kind of moral (?) superiority of the Christian religion over other creeds of the world. But if they are held tightly to the meaning of their words they can escape only under the cover of transparent prevarications and by dint of the dense understanding or contemptuous indifference of their opponents.

It is not our purpose to deny the value of the ethical instinct; but we are sworn foes of the hollow pretensions of the so-called empiric Science of ethics which has such a disastrous effect on the morals of some of its votaries. It makes them insuperably self-conceited 'without rhyme or reason'. Godhead is no doubt the Source of all righteousness but certainly not of the brand that is manufactured by the Science of empiric ethics. That Science will be found on examination to be opposed to the real ethical issue by its presumption of being able to explain all ethical value by the superficial analysis of the external activities in which the ethical principle seeks to express itself. The method is that of shunting off the real issue to the side track and getting up a case in favour of its unworthy proxy on the evidence of non-essential adventitious circumstances.

We appeal to the experience of all that no person had ever been helped to become more ethical by the mere study of the empiric ethical Science, nor has any person been ever really satisfied that the Science has been able to throw *any* light on the nature of the principle that really matters. It has, on the contrary, only offered destructive criticism of the only really ethical conduct on the irrelevant ground of the defective circumstances under which it manifests itself in this world.

It is really the immaculate soul who expresses his dissatisfaction of meaningless unnatural sensuous existence, in the form of the ethical protest. The soul cannot be satisfied by any values offered by our mundane experience or hopes of mundane improvement. He believes instinctively in an existence which is

wholly free from all these defects and is impelled by his innate nature to seek to realise the conditions of such existence. It is the question of function and plane, about which the empiricist is so unduly sceptical. The function of the soul on the mundane plane is directed, is bound unaccountably to be directed, towards only mundane objects. The mundane objective is also, in its turn the cause of the degeneration of the function. The organs, through which the soul functions towards the mundane objective, share in the defects of the objective and are as unavoidable causes of degeneracy as the objective itself. This is the only ethical problem.

The ethical instinct is thus correlated with the quest for the Truth, not the speculative truth which sets its heart on a radically glorified sensuous existence but the Absolute Truth to Whom the present muddy understanding, with its natural preference for the dirt, has no access and which is not even privileged to suspect that it is itself so far away from the direction of the Truth. This introduces the all-important factor of the plane. The ethical life is capable of being substantively realised, in a form that is perfectly unintelligible to our present understanding, only on the plane of the Absolute, to which our present faculties have no access.

This brings us to the necessity of Divine Grace for being relieved of our mundane equipments. Until this point of view has been reached by the discontented soul by the force of his earthly disillusionments, he is not in a position to lend his ear to the message regarding the proper nature of the spiritual function and the only method of its attainment. A person, who has arrived at this stage, should be in a position to recognise the manifestation of Divine Mercy in aid of the seeker of the Truth. The *Archā* is such Divine Manifestation. The Feet of the Lord, worshipped at *Gayā*, are *really* the Feet of the Lord Himself and may be seen as such only by the most fortunate people who have been convinced of the utter worthlessness of the promised improvement of this temporary worldly existence by speculative methods and have been thereby led to put their trust, not blindly but in all true rational humility, in Divine Aid Appearing in a

form that is also accessible to our present defective equipments. To such a person the *Archā* of the Feet of the Lord at Gayā manifests His Divine Nature.

The actual service of Godhead is barred to empiricists by reason of their stubborn disbelief in the Divinity of the *Archā*. An aspect of the Protestant movement in Christianity and the religion of Mohammad as expounded by certain schools of his followers, inculcate doctrines akin to those of the school of the worshippers (?) of the undifferentiated Brahman in this country. The element of error in such attitude consists in the fact that it seems to imply the wrong assumption that it is possible to rise to the conception of the Nature of Godhead in a way that is also explicable to mundane judgment. The Descent of Godhead is not, therefore, fully admitted. Once the empiric ambition of our capacity to work up to Godhead is properly discarded the deluded form of iconoclastic fury should appear to be itself subject to the delusion which it claims to condemn with such otherwise laudable vehemence. The iconoclasm of the rabid iconoclast must be carefully avoided by the cultivation of the true patience of judgment if one is to earn the privilege of recognising the Descent of Godhead in the *Archā*. Those, who are unfit to worship the *Archā*, are still less qualified for the higher form of confidential worship of the Holy Name by the methods of Kirtana and recollection.

The Mercy of Godhead is recognisable by His influence on the disposition of His recipient. As soon as Godhead wills to show Himself to the fettered soul, He does so by directing the latter to seek the guidance of His devotee. This involves two things. The person favoured by Godhead is enabled to recognise the devotee and is also enabled to be convinced of the necessity of submitting to his unconditional guidance. If this result is not produced we should suppose that the person has not really received the Divine Favour but has only been deceived by his own disloyal imagination.

As Sree Gaursundar was in the act of exhibiting those spiritual perturbations that were produced by hearing the praise of the Holy Feet of Sree Gadādhara from the lips of the Brāhmaṇas,

Sree Iswara Puri appeared on the spot, apparently by mere accident, but really by the Will of Godhead. On catching sight of Sree Iswara Puri Sree Gaursundar made obeisance to him with an exhibition of His most cordial regard. Iswara Puri also on his part, on seeing Gaurachandra, embraced Him with great delight. The Holy Forms of Both were drenched with the tears of Both by the force of the experience of spiritual joy.

The Lord said, 'My pilgrimage to Gayā has borne fruit only now inasmuch as I have obtained the sight of your feet. By offering the *pinda* at Gayā only the *pitrīs* are saved from their sufferings. Even so it is only the particular person, to whom the *pinda* is offered that is saved thereby. By the sight of you crores of the groups of the *pitrīs* are instantly set free from all their fetters. Therefore, the *tirtha* itself is not the equal of you, You are the highest of *tirthas* and the best of all blessings. Vouchsafe to deliver Me from the ocean of this worldly sojourn. I surrender My Person to you, now and here. May you be pleased to make Me drink of the nectarine juice of the Lotus Feet of Krishna. This is the gift that I pray for'. Iswara Puri replied, 'Listen, Pandit, I now know as certain that Thou art Divine Portion of the Iswara Himself. Are scholarship and goodness, that are Thine, possible in one who is not the Portion of the Divinity? I have had an auspicious dream of this truth this very day. I have now obtained the fruit of it in this tangible form. I tell Thee truly, Pandit. At the sight of Thee I experience the transcendental bliss at all time. Ever since I beheld Thee at Nadiā nothing else has had any attraction for my heart. This is the bare truth I am telling Thee. There is nothing else in it but the truth. I obtain the bliss of beholding Krishna by seeing Thee.'

On hearing the true words of His beloved Iswara Puri the Lord said laughingly, 'I am, indeed, most fortunate.' This was followed by a good deal of mutual talk in which both joined with alacrity. Thākura Brindāvandās does not attempt to record the same, remarking that the task will be performed in future by Sree Vedavyasa. Having greeted Sree Iswara Puri in this manner the Lord, after begging and obtaining his permission, applied

Himself to the performance of the funeral rites that are enjoined by the Scriptures on the pious pilgrim on his arrival at the *tirtha*.

The Lord now performed the rite of offering the *pinda* on the sand and went to the hill-top of Preta-Gayā. Having performed the rite of loyal homage (*Srāddha*) at Preta-Gayā the Son of Sree Shachi gratified the Brāhmaṇas by gifts and sweet words. Having thus delivered and pleased the *pitrīs* the Lord proceeded to Dakshina Mānasa with a glad Heart. The Lord next visited Sree Rāma-Gayā where He had performed the *srāddha* when He Appeared in this world as Sree Rāmachandra. After performing the same ceremony at the place in this Avatāra also, Sree Gaur-Hari went from there to Judhīsthira-Gayā where Judhīsthira had offered the *pinda* in old times. Lord Gaurarāi now exhibited the *Leelā* of performing the same ceremony at this place in loving remembrance of that event. The Brāhmaṇas, attending on all sides of the Lord, made Him perform the *srāddha* and made the Lord repeat their words. As the Lord threw the *pinda* into the water on the conclusion of the ceremony, the priestly Brāhmaṇas of Gayā caught up and swallowed the same. The Lord laughed as He saw this performance. All the worldly fetters of those Brāhmaṇas were cancelled. After offering the *pinda* at Uttara Mānasa Gaurāṅga Sree Hari performed the rites of Bhima Gayā. The Lord duly performed all the customary ceremonies at Siva-Gayā, Brahma-Gayā and all the other places and at last went up to Shorasha-Gayā. Having performed the *Shorashi* at Shorasha-Gayā, the Lord offered the *pinda* to all, with all due regard. Then, after bathing in the Brahma Kunda, the Supreme Lord came up to the Head of Gaya and offered the *pinda* there. Taking up the excellent garlands and sandal-paste with His Own Beautiful Hands, the Lord worshipped the Print of the Feet of Vishnu with great joy. Having thus performed the *srāddha* at all the different places, the Lord returned to His lodgings after satisfying the Brāhmaṇas with gifts.

After refreshing Himself by a short rest, the Lord began to cook His meal. Just as He had finished cooking the great Sree Iswara Puri arrived there. In the act of reciting the Name of Krishṇa by the process of loving devotion Puri came

with tottering steps to where the Lord was preparing His meal. The Lord desisted from cooking as soon as He caught sight of Puri and, with the greatest reverence, after making His obeisance, offered him the best seat and made him seated.

Puri said laughingly, 'Listen, Pandit, I find that it is in very good time, indeed, that I chance to arrive!' The Lord replied, 'As the good fortune has manifested itself, may your reverence accept the alms of this cooked food to-day.' As this request was pressed by the Lord Puri laughed as he said, 'What wilt Thou have?' The Lord replied, 'I will cook again, just now'. Puri demurred, 'What is the use of cooking again? Divide the cooked food into two halves.' The Lord could not help smiling as He said, 'If, indeed, you want to have Me at all, accept all the food that has been cooked. I will cook afresh, in a very short time. Be pleased not to hesitate, but do accept this alms.'

Thereupon the Lord, making over His own food to Puri, applied to cook for Himself once again with a joyful Heart. Great, indeed, is the Mercy of the Lord to Sree Iswara Puri. Puri also on his part had no other inclination save towards Krishna. The Lord served the meal with His Own Beautiful Hands. Puri ate in the state of transcendent bliss. At that very moment Ramādevi Herself, unobserved by any one, with the greatest secrecy, cooked the food for the Lord in no time. After having made Puri accept the alms of food, the Lord ate His meal with a glad Heart. Those, concludes Thākur Brindāvandās, who listen to this Narrative of the dining of the Lord in the company of Iswara Puri, gain the treasure of the love of Krishna.

After finishing His meal, the Lord, with His Own Holy Hands, applied excellent perfumes to all parts of the person of Sree Iswara Puri. The tenderness of the love of the Lord for Iswara Puri passes the power of description of all persons. Lord Sree Chaitanya, Who is Godhead Himself, undertook a pilgrimage to the birth place of Sree Iswara Puri. Arrived at the place, the Lord greeted it with His fervent Affection. 'I make My obeisance', said He, 'to Sree Kumārahatta, the blessed village in which Sree Iswara Puri made his appearance in this

world'. Chaitanya wept long at the sight of the place, and could not articulate any other sound except 'Iswara Puri'. The Lord took the earth from the spot and, tying it in His Own outer-cloth, brought it with Him. 'This is the birth-place of Iswara Puri,' said the Lord. 'This earth is My Heart's Love, My Treasure, My Life.' With such intensity does the Lord love Sree Iswara Puri. The Supreme Lord, indeed, wields all His Power to glorify His devotee. The Lord said, 'That I came to Gayā on pilgrimage, has been proved to be true, as I have obtained the sight of Iswara Puri.'

On the following day the Lord went to Sree Iswara Puri alone by Himself and implored from him, with sweet words, the favour of initiation (*dikshā*) by the *mantra*. Puri said, It is a small matter to bestow the *mantra*. I can by all means give Thee my life.' Thereupon, Nārāyana, Teacher-Guru of the world, accepted the ten-lettered *mantra* from him. Then the Lord after circumambulating Puri said to him, 'I surrender My Person to you. May you bend your auspicious glance on Me that I may float in the ocean of the love of Krishna'. On hearing these words of the Lord Sree Iswara Puri bestowed his embrace on Sree Gaursundar by clasping Him to his bosom. The Forms of Both were drenched with the tears of Both by love, and Neither could remain unmoved.

The question of unconditional submission to the spiritual guide has a close connection with that of ritual in general. Those, who are on principle averse to ritualistic observance in any form, are also necessarily disinclined to express in any formal way their decision to submit to the direction of the spiritual guide. They are disposed to make a distinction between the external act and the internal motive prompting the same and to hold the former as superfluous and unnecessary. This will appear to be an untenable attitude inasmuch as just to the extent that one's own differing judgment is asserted in the method and motive of offering one's submission, the submission, that is so offered, is rendered conditional and imperfect. Such protest is, therefore, really made against the principle of unconditional submission itself.

The point, that has to be borne in mind, is that the submission in this case is offered to the Supreme Lord Himself. If the Guru is supposed to be less than Divine, less than the Truth Himself, the disposition, that holds back the offer of unconditional submission from such an entity, is both rational and perfectly justifiable. No one is under any obligation to offer his submission to the non-Truth. From this point of view the offer of partial submission to anything or to any person can be only a hypocritical show of submission against one's own conviction. The Truth is Truth. Adulterated Truth is contradiction in terms. Adulterated truth is untruth that tries to pass itself off as truth on this mundane plane of self-deceived delusions.

In this world no one is anxious to serve, but every one is anxious to be served. Service is, therefore, rendered in the expectation of a return in service greater than what is offered, by the estimation of the recipient of service. He who renders service is actuated by this deliberate desire to deceive the recipient of such service. This is the principle of hypocrisy. Expectation of greater service from others, is the antithesis of the *bona fide* impulse of service. One, who really offers service, does so without expectation of return, in any form, in exchange of the service that is offered. If the servant is critical, he is critical only to be on his guard against any reservation on his part. He is only anxious to render the complete service. He is anxious to be satisfied that there is no lurking reservation in this matter in any obscure corner of his heart. He is anxious to study the nature of the demand that is made upon him by his master. He is not disposed to criticise the motive or method of the master making the demand. The servant must not suppose himself to be a better judge of the requirement of his master than the Master Himself. If he thinks he should be allowed to judge as to how the master should be served, he steps into the place of the master and makes his real Master serve the pleasure of His hypocritical servant. This would be the reversion of the natural process.

The show of opposition, that is made by the really loyal servant to the Master's wishes, should not be confounded with the

desire of the disloyal servant to thwart the master for reasons of his own convenience. The demarcating line is, no doubt, an extremely fine one and is likely to be missed by those who have not a very clean heart. But there is all the difference between the seeming opposition of the loyal servant and the disloyal attempts of the mercenary self-seeker, that distinguishes the genuine gold from the treacherous counterfeit. The latter of course tries to mask his disloyal motive under the profession of an over-strained solicitude for the Master's interest. This only makes his conduct more hideous and ungrateful. The objectionable principle, underlying the latter form of conduct, is called hypocrisy. The loyal servant is free from all taint of hypocrisy. He may commit mistakes in judging the Master's wishes, but he is always and fully anxious to understand and serve the wishes of his Master. Any seeming opposition of his to his Master's wishes, even when his judgment is wrong, also expresses his single-hearted devotion to his Master's interests.

The mischief is that the conditioned soul has got also other interests besides the service of the Truth. The conditioned soul is prepared, in every case, to offer this mixed form of service to Godhead. The disloyal servant also is prepared to serve his Master to a varying extent. It is seldom that the disloyal servant is prepared to openly defy his Master in every act. But even when the disloyal servant happens to agree to serve his Master, he does so for the ultimate purpose of serving only himself thereby. The hypocrite throws off the mask as soon as he is safe to disobey his Master without the risk of jeopardizing his interests, or when his own interests are best promoted by open disobedience. In the case of the loyal servant the Master's difficulties only serve to vindicate the genuineness of his loyal disposition by making him still more submissive to his Master.

It is necessary for every one, who is really anxious to find and serve the Truth, to realise that the Truth is not to be found by the present physical and mental equipments. It is further necessary to realise that it is nevertheless possible to find and serve the Truth by the present defective equipments by the Grace of Truth Himself. One is then prepared to wait patiently till the

initiative of the Truth is properly realised. The person, who is in this genuine expectant mood, is on the lookout for the Appearance of the Truth in any form that Truth likes. He is prepared to understand that, as Truth is All Powerful, He is likely to appear to his own defective understanding in a form that is least likely to conform to his natural misjudgment. He knows that all these difficulties notwithstanding the Grace of Truth is sufficiently powerful to prevail over all obstacles and to manifest Himself to His servant in a manner that is perfectly inconceivable to our defective judgment.

This is the Theistic disposition proper. It is credulous in the sense that, although it is never prepared to remain satisfied with seeming Truth or half truth, it is always fully ready to make its unconditional, that is to say, loving submission to the Real Truth the moment He makes His Appearance. The Theistic disposition is prepared to wait patiently, even inactively, as far as this is at all practicable, till the actual Appearance of the Master of his heart. He does not believe in pragmatic loyalty. He abhors to serve any thing but the Absolute Truth. To such a disposition the Truth is bound to manifest Himself.

The worship of the Feet of Sree Gadādhara or the offering of the *pinda* to the Manes by Sree Gaursundar, is not performed for any other purpose than for serving the pleasure of the Lord. An analysis of the forms of the rituals, enjoined by the Scriptures, should make it abundantly clear to every impartial person that making the service of the Lord the only duty of all persons is their only object. There is, therefore, no falling away from Theism by such activity even on the part of those who are not in a position to explain their motive to the satisfaction of those logicians who are illogically opposed to the Theistic disposition. It is the atheistic attitude that makes the ritualistic worship a form of idolatry. But the atheistic iconoclast is the worst of idolaters as he is actuated by the resolve not to recognise the Omnipotence of the Supreme Lord and the consequent necessity of His Grace for being enabled to distinguish between the idol and the Divinity. The iconoclast launches his fury against the Lord, Whom he mistakes to be stone or earth by the deluding evidence

of his senses, whose slave he is by his nature. The truly serving disposition is always really humbler than the blade of grass, being aware that nothing is impossible with the Lord and that it is never possible to find Him by venting one's malice against His creatures or by the assertion of one's superior claim to self-conceited righteousness.

The conditioned soul stands in absolute need of Grace. This Grace can only descend to him when he is in the attitude of absolute humility. This Grace is bestowed directly by the Supreme Lord on the sincere seeker of His Grace. In the recipient the Grace of Godhead expresses His presence in the form of the rational inclination of seeking perpetual enlightenment from the devotee of Godhead. He, who is disposed to serve the Lord but not His devotee, is really disposed to serve nobody except the deluded self. One, who is disposed to serve the Lord, is disposed to serve His servant, if possible, with even greater loyalty. The loyal subject of the King is not, therefore, less loyal to one who is commissioned by the King to carry out his commands in regard to himself. The Guru is no other than the Servant of the Lord, commissioned to effect the deliverance of those who are really anxious to serve the Lord. The *Archā* is the Lord making Himself accessible to the worship of conditioned souls by means of all their defective equipments. The *Archā* is not an image made by the hand of man. Neither is the Guru a mortal like ourselves. It is only the delivered soul who can help the conditioned soul to gain his deliverance. It is the eternally pure souls, who are themselves infallible by their nature, who are sent into this world in the form of the Guru to impart spiritual enlightenment to the individual soul liable to be fettered by the flesh. The Guru seems to the senses and the sensuous judgment to be an ordinary mortal. But he is not really any part of this plane at all, no more than the *Archā*. Both are equally manifestations of the eternal saving Potency of the All-merciful Supreme Lord to deliver the conditioned soul from his self-elected bondage of the deluding energy.

By an empiric analysis of the wording of the *mantra* or the composition of the *Archā* or the eternal conduct of the spiritual

guide one cannot hope to gain any idea of the substantive plane of the Absolute. Because it happens to be really the attitude of refusal to recognise the imperative and moral necessity of loyally seeking for the Divine Grace for the attainment of spiritual enlightenment.

CHAPTER XXIII

HIS INITIATION—(*Contd.*)

RITUAL may be defined as worship by means of the objects of this world, which function alone is available to the conditioned soul, rendered possible by the Grace of Godhead as revealed by the Scriptures and the spiritual Guide to the community of the servants of the Lord.

The empiric theory, which seeks to derive the form and significance of ritual from the worldly activities of the ancient peoples, is based on the assumption of the impossibility and superfluity of revelation as the source of worship. But as a matter of fact it is never possible for man, by progress in material civilization, to attain either to the form or significance of spiritual worship. The form of worship can derive its spiritual value, if it has any, only from revelation. As it does not possess any mundane significance it is, therefore, independent of all mundane reference. It may satisfy the spirit of antiquarian curiosity to discover how the superficial aspect of the eternal process of worship varies from country to country and from Age to Age. But will any number of such 'discoveries' add to our knowledge of the real meaning of either the form or the spirit of true worship?

If the mind can be supposed to be fit to worship Godhead by means of concepts or percepts referring to objects of phenomenal Nature, why should such worship be impossible by means of the objects themselves? But mental worship in itself is no nearer to Godhead than the show of worship by means of material substances, both being made of non-spiritual stuff. The one is as much in need of the Divine Sanction as the other, if it is to reach the Divinity at all. The one is as much capable of being turned into worship as the other by virtue of such Sanction. The contro-

versy among empiricists on the subject of worship rages round the external form versus the mental conception both of which are, by themselves, *i.e.*, as they appear to the empiricists, wholly devoid of all spiritual significance.

The allied question, bearing on the same issue, may be put thus. Granted that a mental and physical activity is endowed with spiritual quality of the service of the Divinity by the Divine Sanction, why should Divine Sanction itself be confined to any particular and strictly circumscribed form of such activity and not extend to the whole range of secular activities? There is apparently much to be said in favour of such contention from the point of view of ordinary rational judgment. If the whole range of activities, both physical and mental, be made to be covered by the term 'ritual' then the departmental narrowness, that has come to attach itself to the term, would be removed. There are also numerous passages in the Scriptures themselves in support of such contention and to prove that one, who worships Godhead, necessarily does so by every act of his life.

But notwithstanding all this, spiritual worship is neither narrow and departmental nor liberal and comprehensive in the empiric sense. These terms of condemnation and praise do not apply to the issue at all. It is, therefore, necessary to be humble on the threshold of any serious enquiry into the nature of the substantive spiritual function. Pantheistic thought is only one form of atheism. No mental speculation in itself is logically admissible regarding the Absolute, by reason of the fact that the mind has no access to the transcendental plane.

The form of the ritual is not improved by the supersession of the methods of antiquity by more 'modern' methods on the ground that these would be more 'intelligible' to our present judgment. The question of intelligibility in the empiric sense does not matter. When Godhead is addressed by the empiricist as the Source of all existence, such form of prayer is adopted for the reason that it is supposed to be intelligible to our limited understanding. But does the prayer become a spiritual function by any such rational approval on the part of the worshipper? It is not denied that Godhead is the Source of all existence. Neither is it

admitted that if a person addresses Godhead as the Source of all existence, he will be enabled to be in communion with Godhead by such prayer. How does he really know that Godhead is the Source of everything? His real ignorance cannot be removed by merely repeating a formula whose meaning it is beyond his capacity to understand. If he chooses to remain satisfied with an empty performance, he should be considered to be indifferent to the issue.

If Godhead is the Source of all existence, as the rational faculty claims to know instinctively, how is the same aspiring faculty to reconcile such a supposition with its own actual utter ignorance of the nature of its relationship with its own supposed source? Hydrogen and Oxygen were not instinctively claimed to be known as the source of water by the same all-knowing instinct. Is it not, therefore, only a silly and superficial vanity that leads such ignorant persons to 'believe' that Godhead is the Source of all existence?

Such an attitude of ignorant omniscience, so lightly assumed as their birthright in the name of the rational instinct by deluded souls, has to be got rid of if religion is to avoid the defect that is attributed by physical scientists to the speculative philosophers, *viz.*, that their subject 'bakes no bread'. The sterile philosophy of empiricism has been weighed in the balance for too long a period and has been found wholly wanting. The World is in some need of a positive and real, and not merely hypothetical, solution of its spiritual difficulties.

In the process of spiritual enlightenment there is also, quite inconceivably to our present power of understanding no doubt, a beginning of the process followed by a probationary stage which has to be gone through before the goal is reached. The first faint glimmering of the approaching light is sufficient to impart the consciousness of the categorical nature of the difference that separates the plane of the mind and physical body from that of the soul. All empiric questionings are at once and necessarily solved by this first experience of the actual spiritual life.

Thereafter arises a new curiosity which relates itself wholly to the transcendental plane. The experience of the glimmer of

light proceeding from a realm that is yet completely out of sight except by the relationship of the light which while bearing testimony to the reality of spiritual existence securely keeps the secret of all definite knowledge regarding the same, makes one anxious, not for the nostrums concocted for their idle amusement by the children of darkness but, for positive information from those who really know about that world, which is only then actually realised to be perfectly unknown and unknowable to the aspiring understanding of man.

The present Narrative may be regarded in two possible ways. The first is the ordinary empiric way for the satisfaction of a limited curiosity born of the mental outlook. Such study is not likely to be of much positive benefit. But it may have the negative value of removing misconceptions to which even the open minded persons are liable by reason of habitual and normal association with worldly-minded people. This Narrative may strike the imagination of such a person and may induce a few to agree with the point of view of the Scriptures as set forth in these pages. If any person thereupon choose to undertake to act up to the principles inculcated by the Deeds of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya, he will be in a position to realise the necessity of praying for the Grace of Godhead for directing him to the proper teacher of the Truth. If the prayer is, indeed, not altogether hypocritical the sincere seeker of Divine Aid may be rewarded by the Mercy of Godhead and find the *bona fide* spiritual guide. The same Influence may also help him to make the complete surrender of himself at the feet of the Guru when found and to approach him with the further prayer for positive spiritual enlightenment. The Mercy of Godhead will further enable such a person to be accepted by the Guru. The acceptance by the Guru of his offer of submission will be the beginning of his spiritual pupilage, and in proportion as he will be enabled to enter into the plans and views of the Guru by the method of loyal, willing, rational obedience, the true meaning of the Deeds of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya will manifest Themselves to his serving disposition. If he thereafter reads the Narrative that has been handed down by the former serving teachers of the

religion (the *bona fide* Āchāryyas) he will gain the positive knowledge of the Truth.

In the following pages of this work the Events of the Career of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya, corresponding to the activity of the seeker of the Truth after he has sought for and received spiritual enlightenment from the *bona fide* teacher of the Truth, are recorded and interpreted in pursuance of the exposition of the Āchāryyas, by the method of the service of the *bona fide* spiritual guide. It will not be possible for the uninitiated to enter into the spiritual meaning of such a Narrative. But every one will be enabled to avoid forming any hasty and adverse opinion if he only keeps in mind the necessary reservations when going through the account of the happenings of the transcendental plane to which the conditioned soul has no access in their substantive sense. It can be to him more or less only like a story of the Fairyland with this difference that the realm of the soul is not the concoction of the fertile imagination of man as the other is; but on the contrary it is the only Substantive Reality that vitally concerns all of us both individually and collectively. No reader of a fairy tale ever thinks it worth his while to quarrel with any happenings in the Fairyland even if they are in flat contradiction to all experiences of this world. In the case of this Narrative also, from this point onward, even if the reader is unable to agree with any proposition fully, he need not for an analogous reason cherish any feeling of hostility inasmuch as the propositions have no direct application to the plane of three dimensions for which alone he is at present positively interested. His hostility against the Fairyland would be like fighting with a shadow as the land of the Fairies is not capable of being affected by his mundane blows; and one should not quarrel with a shadow on principle. If one is disposed to quarrel by apprehending any bad effect that the story may appear likely to produce on his actual worldly position, he should still be able to find consolation in the reflection that his mere desire to banish from this world anything that he does not like, will not necessarily rid it of those objectionable entities, and, therefore, if those entities are entitled to have a place in the world it is the world that deserves to be condemned and not the story which would

be perfectly harmless but for this possibility of its existence in the world despite our desire to the contrary.

We are not required either by our rational instinct or by the Scriptures to shut our ears against anybody. It is only during pupilage that the student is required to obey the teacher not mechanically but by the method of progressive co-operating conviction. The association with evil-doers, that is so strongly condemned by the Scriptures, is to be understood in the similar rational sense. The objectionable form of association with evil can arise only when we identify ourselves with the evil. It is not always practicable nor desirable to avoid external association with evil. But it is always practicable and desirable to have a protesting or at any rate an indifferent attitude towards evil. One must not be a consenting associating party with evil. A person is not capable of being contaminated by mere external association with evil, although he may be living in this world where 'even the light is as darkness'. The attempt to avoid all association with evil by the mechanical method is only another form of association with evil. One, who is impure at heart but fastidious in his external conduct, is called in ordinary language a hypocrite, who is not less harmful and who is not to be less avoided than the downright professed scoundrel.

There need not be any unnecessary mystery about spiritual matters. Everything is not intelligible to everyone. It is necessary also to adopt a method that is neither unintelligible nor misleading to the hearer. But nothing need be kept a secret unless it is impossible to be divulged without producing serious and harmful misunderstanding. The *mantra* is not to be divulged to another person, because this is quite a personal matter. It is also quite proper and logical to have the principles of reserve and privacy in the realm of the soul. It is not necessary to abuse those principles for securing transitory and narrow interests, as we do in this world. They are capable of being used and should by all means be used, for serving the Truth. This will no doubt give a chance to the hypocrite and the pseudo-teachers of religion to befool their over-credulous victims; but it should befool nobody

who does not want to be befooled by their over-attachment to the bauble pleasures of this world.

The nature of those funeral rites, that are enjoined by the Scriptures, requires to be understood from the point of view of the service of Godhead. One's duty to one's parents does not cease with the death of the latter. This admission is not avoidable by those who recognise the claim of their parents to their duty in return of benefits received from them. The circle of such duties and benefits no doubt belong to the mundane plane. Death is the greatest calamity that may befall the relationship of parent and child. It severs the earthly connection between them. But does it really sever all connection? The elevationists do not believe it does. They suppose that the subtle body survives the death of the gross physical body. This subtle body has to be reborn after an interval during which it remains dissociated from the gross body. The subtle body embodies the principle of material enjoyment. But it does not obtain this enjoyment except through the gross body. The subtle body in the dissociated state, is called the *preta*. The funeral rites are intended for the benefit of the *preta*. This benefit, as understood by the elevationists (*smārtas*), consists in the rebirth of the *preta* in some other gross body. By such rebirth the *preta* is supposed to be delivered from his torments of the *preta* state. The salvationists on the other hand suppose that the *preta* is delivered if he is enabled to avoid rebirth in the gross body by merging in the Divinity. The Vaishnavas do not recognise any special duty to their forbears, for the reason that such duty is rendered to the material case which is wrongly identified by the elevationists and salvationists alike with the individual soul who is the person to whom all duties are really due. The individual soul is not served by any function that is intended for the amelioration of the gross or subtle material case. The Vaishnavas accordingly express their duty towards their forbears and all departed persons by making their offering at the Feet of Gadādhara.

At Gayā the round of the funeral ceremonies leads up to the worship of the Feet of Vishnu, as their consummation. This is the relation in which the *Smārta* ceremonies are intended by the

Scriptures to stand to the spiritual function proper. The Manes, i.e., souls imprisoned in the subtle bodies, are benefited by their descendants' worship of the Feet of Gadādhara. The performance of funeral rites by Godhead Himself is not to be supposed a concession to elevationist or salvationist method or objective. The avoidance of the ceremonies, by those who do not worship the Feet of Gadādhara, is also not supported by the conduct of Sree Gaursundar. What it is intended to signify, is that the *smārta* practice is the result of gratitude that is naturally felt by a person, who confounds himself with his physical cases, towards the forbears of those cases. One, who is in the deluded condition, need not be hypocritically ungrateful to his worldly parents till he has been really relieved from the state of ignorance. He would be delivered from his ignorance and all supposed obligations of that state, if he could attain to the pure service of the Feet of Vishnu. This desideratum is recognised by the arrangement for the performance of the *srāddha* ceremonies at Gayā leading up to the worship of the Feet of Gadādhara. According to the dictum of the Scriptures a person, who desires to attain to the service of Godhead, should perform all duties enjoined by the custom of his society or preferably by the Veda in the way that is conducive to the attainment of the spiritual function. The *smārta* view is that the devotee of Godhead is also under equal obligation to appease the Manes by the performance of the *srāddha* ceremonies. This is the reverse of the principle that is followed at Gayā in the due performance of the funeral rites. The Supreme Teacher recognised by His Conduct the justification of the elevationist and salvationist function for the social purpose, while pointing to the attainment of the service of Godhead as the objective towards which all activities should tend if they are to possess any positive value for the soul. If any portion of the funeral ritual is opposed to this end it is necessarily unacceptable to the Vaishnavas, for that reason.

The *ritual* of *dikshā* or initiation is liable to be similarly misunderstood. The *smārta* view of the ceremony is similar to their view of the funeral ritual. The *smārta* is anxious to provide for the needs of the gross and subtle physical cases. He deliberately

ignores the need of the soul, because that is opposed to the interests (?) of the physical cases as understood by the *smārtas*. The ceremony of *dikshā*, according to the *smārta* view, confers only on the Brāhmaṇa by seminal birth the eligibility for the worship of Sree Nārāyaṇa. Those, who are not Brāhmaṇas by seminal birth, are, according to this view, enabled by the process only to be born as Brāhmaṇas in their next birth; but it does not entitle them to worship Sree Nārāyaṇa in their present life. The Brāhmaṇa, who is eligible to worship Nārāyaṇa or Godhead, is thus supposed to be the entity, *viz.*, the physical cases, that is born of mundane parents. But as a matter of fact the physical cases have no access to Vishnu and the process of *dikshā* cannot accordingly apply to them and for this reason *dikshā* is not a social but a spiritual function the nature of which is misunderstood by those so-called Brāhmaṇas who are anxious to retain intact their hereditary social privileges.

By seminal birth, on the contrary, everyone is made a *Sudra* who is the opposite of a Brāhmaṇa. The seminal birth provides the physical cases by which the conditioned soul is made subject to the sufferings of this world, or, in other words, is made a *Sudra* which term literally means ‘one who is subject to sorrow’. By the purificatory ceremony of *Upanayana*, or being conducted to the Guru for attaining to the knowledge (*Veda*) of one’s relationship with Godhead (*dikshā*) in order to be enabled to serve Him on the spiritual plane, the *Sudra* is *re-born*, not as a physical or mental case but, as a soul or *student* of the *Veda*. This second birth is not seminal birth, because the pupil, who submits to the Guru, is not the physical body born of semen but the soul inhabiting the same. The substantive consciousness, that one is not the physical body but the soul inhabiting the body, can alone enable one to serve the Guru for obtaining the true knowledge of the function of his own proper self.

The ceremony of *Upanayana*, therefore, admits the necessity, on the part of the conditioned soul, of serving the Guru and represents the soul’s act of appearing before the Guru in order to learn to serve Godhead. The ceremony of *dikshā* confers on the soul actual spiritual enlightenment. When the Guru is satis-

fied by the probationary test that the candidate for spiritual enlightenment possesses the genuine aptitude for service, he confers on him the knowledge of his relationship with Godhead which enables him to serve Godhead. By means of *dikshā* a person is thus born a *third* time. It is a case not of seminal birth, but of the completion of the probationary stage of the spiritual pupilage of the soul.

The purificatory process of *Upanayana* and *dikshā* are also proved to be necessarily open to all persons irrespective of seminal birth. The seminal birth can bestow only mundane aptitudes. The seminal birth cannot convey, or entitle one to, the spiritual nature. That, which conveys or entitles to the spiritual nature, is spiritual birth by *upanayana* and *dikshā*. There is real analogy but a difference of plane between the seminal and spiritual birth.

Upanayana is the process of being conducted to the Guru. This refers to the function of the *shikshā Guru*. The *shikshā Gurus* may be many, but the *dikshā Guru* is only one. The *shikshā Gurus* are the associated counterparts of the *dikshā Guru* who is the associated counterwhole of the Divinity Himself. There is thus only one *dikshā Guru* who is associated with his infinity of agents or limbs whose function is to lead the intending disciple to the *dikshā Guru*. The *dikshā Guru* may, indeed, be also the *shikshā Guru*, but not necessarily so. The distinction between the *shikshā Guru* and the *dikshā Guru* is one relating to their respective spiritual functions which do not involve any unwholesome implication of inferiority in the mundane sense. The *shikshā Guru* is, therefore, to be as much obeyed by the disciple as the *dikshā Guru* himself.

The function of *dikshā*, in its ritualistic aspect, consists of the process of imparting the *mantra* by the *dikshā Guru* which is spoken by him into the ear of the disciple without being allowed to be heard by any other person. It is the method of Truth communicating Himself to an individual soul in the Form of the Transcendental Sound Appearing on the Lips of His devotee. The *mantra*, as we have explained elsewhere, is the Holy Name in the Form in which He is coupled with the process of self-dedication of an individual to the *Guru*. It is a specific matter that

delivers the particular individual from the grip of all mental delusion by making him throw himself on the protection of the Name under the exclusive direction of the *Guru*. The process of initiation is not a limited one. It is as much a continued process as the process of being helped by the *shikshā Guru* for approaching the *dikshā Guru*. No one of these processes is capable of terminating in a limited result. They are eternally co-present in a relation that is progressive but without being hampered by the unwholesome imperfection of the principle of limitation.

It has been necessary to explain the process of entry into the spiritual life in some detail for several reasons. A good deal of misconception has gathered round the issue. This misconception is responsible for the mushroom growth of an endless variety of pseudo-forms of the process that are being constantly manufactured by quacks and knaves for leading astray simpletons and rascals, by the offer of their support to diverse forms of pernicious worldly activities. It is not also easy to withstand the temptation of being misled by the appeal to the principle of pseudo-ethics manufactured by intellectualists for justifying a life of the sensualists paradis for belittling the spiritual issue which transcends the petty concerns of a nine days' existence. It is absolutely necessary to have this sense of perspective, if one is not to miss the only purpose for which the subject, treated in this work, has been offered to his unbiased and serious consideration.

Nothing is easier than to make a butt of ridicule of the concerns of the eternal life by the method of empiric buffoonery. There is an enormous literature, that is also alarmingly growing in volume by leaps and bounds, which has been deliberately seeking to dissuade the limited mind from any thought of the Absolute by covering, with their flimsy ridicule, all transcendental claims of religion. Such effusions may have been partly called forth by the somewhat natural re-action against the practices of the pseudo-religionists who unfortunately abound all over the world. They also serve the salutary purpose of checking the quarrels of the quacks and hypocritical followers of the different religious persuasions. But the warfare, that is waged by atheism against the forms of pseudo-religion, is also itself part and parcel of the

opera show of our deluded existence. The history of the doings of man is full of instructive episodes in a short chapter of a real tragedy of errors which we are gravely asked to regard as the progressive march of an ethical civilization towards increasing perfection. The reader has had enough experience of regarding the doings of the performers on the worldly stage from this supposed optimistic and universally advertised promising point of view. It is not our business here to offer him more of the same familiar commodity.

The real transcendental point of view is condemned by empiricists of all countries, with the exception of India and of those lands which have received their creeds from her, as being the hallucinative product of a sterile pessimism born of a decadent material civilization fretting over the solid achievements of successful rivals. India, which is the cradle and chosen land of the hankering for the realisation of the transcendental existence, presents the spectacle of the continuing attempt to treat social issues by the Scriptural method by refusing to admit the absolute value of mundane interests. No school of Indian philosophy professes to value social activity divorced from the spiritual purpose. The difficulty in this country is due not to the absence of traditional opinion in favour of the endeavour after the realisation of the transcendental existence, as distinguished from the mundane, but to the misunderstanding and misrepresentation, by different schools of misguided exponents, of the nature of the spiritual function itself. Whereas in those countries, which are proud of possessing a social organisation that is not 'priest-ridden' and aims frankly at the multiplication and 'improvement' of the opportunities of sensuous enjoyment and the hopeless 'amelioration' of the *inevitable* consequences of the unhampered pursuit of this optimistic course, the difficulty is due to the absence of all traditional hankering for the attainment of the spiritual state. This last difficulty is infinitely increased by the misrepresentations of the whole body of empiric literature which is never tired of harping *ad nauseam* on the congenial theme of the glories of this mundane existence and holds up its nose in indignant scorn and contempt if the soundness of its wretched point of view is chal-

lenged by straight talk which it affects to invite so vehemently on its own side.

It is not our purpose merely to condemn the activities of this world. We should really try to understand the nature of our proper relationship with them. We should not be willing to be satisfied with any hypothetical views on this all-important subject. We should not be violent lovers of the worldly sojourn without reservation, nor should we be prepared to desire its perpetuation as it is and as it is proposed to be made by those who derive their knowledge and wisdom from their experience of this world and apply them solely for further elaboration of our worldly activities on their present lines. We should long for an unobstructed vision of the Absolute Truth and believe in the possibility of the attainment of such vision, and to adjust our activities during this worldly sojourn to the requirements of our real and whole position revealed by the knowledge of the Absolute Truth. We should be disposed to regard the attitude, that is content to be satisfied with less than the Absolute Truth, as one of insidious and unpardonable revolt against the Absolute Truth. The present Narrative offers a Career That is wholly devoted to the service of the Absolute Truth. We are disposed to consider a pragmatist, if he does not possess the supreme regard due to the devotee of the Absolute Truth, as no better than a dangerous cheat and a sensuous hypocrite who wants only to indulge his aptitude for untruth under the guise of a mock concern for the Truth. We, therefore, claim to be neither pessimists nor optimists in the sense in which the contending factions of the empiric sages array themselves under their respective worldly banners. We should share their furious interest on behalf of the worldly life. We only invite our readers to lend their receptive ear to the narration of the actual Conduct of Nimāi Pandit, as He manifested Himself to this world, after He had received spiritual enlightenment by unconditional submission to the feet of the *bona fide* spiritual Guide. By the process of *diksha*, with the intention of trying to enter the spirit of the same from the point of view of the Narrative itself that has been handed down by the succession of the spiritual teachers.

The boon for which Nimbāī Pandit prayed to Sree Iswara Puri, was love for Krishna. He surrendered to Sree Iswara Puri His Body and Mind unconditionally for the attainment of the above purpose. When one obtains the actual sight of the *bona fide* Spiritual Guide, that is of the real exclusive servant of the Absolute, by the Grace of Godhead, the duty, that he has to perform on his side, is to make the unconditional surrender of himself to the Feet of the *bona fide* Agent of the Absolute. This is the logical and consistent course but is impossible of realization in practice except by Divine Grace.

If the complete surrender to the Guru is made the spiritual *mantra* reveals himself to the disciple. It is now our task to trace the growth of this loving devotion in Nimbāī Pandit. But as we proceed to do so we must bear in mind the fact that Nimbāī Pandit was, indeed, no other than the Lord Himself. This is noticeable in the manner of Sree Iswara Puri towards his Disciple. He says that when he looks at Nimbāī Pandit he obtains the bliss of beholding Krishna Himself. The Vaishnava Guru does not regard any one as his disciple; but he does not, therefore, think that his disciples are Krishna Himself. The Vaishnava Guru regards his disciples as his Gurus and himself as their disciple. The Vaishnava Guru regards his disciples as his Gurus for the reason that as servants of his Lord they are really his Gurus. The disciple, who is under agreement to serve the Lord, becomes, by that very agreement, in the estimation of the Guru to whom he is bound by the agreement, the servant of the Lord Who is served by the Guru, and, therefore, his Guru. Iswara Puri would have been justified in addressing Nimbāī Pandit as his Guru after Nimbāī Pandit had agreed to become the Servant of Krishna. But he did not call his Disciple his Guru but said He was Krishna Himself. This shows the real state of things as realised by Sree Iswara Puri. It is really the Lord Who gave the boon of His Mercy to Iswara Puri under the guise of receiving initiation from His Guru.

Unless this point is properly grasped there will be difficulty in following the subsequent developments. Sree Iswara Puri belonged to the communion of Sree Madhvachāryya. Initiation at

the hands of Sree Iswara Puri marks the entry of Nimāi Pandit into the Mādhva Community. It was certainly not incumbent on the Lord to enrol Himself under the banner of Madhva. This would prevent Him, according to usage, from breaking away from the tenets of a particular Community. It is well known that Sree Madhva did not teach the service of Sree Sree Rādhā-Govinda which was preached and practised by Nimāi Pandit. There is thus only connection but not identity of teaching between Sree Chaitanya and Sree Madhva. Sree Mādhavendra Puri, the Guru of Sree Iswara Puri, was the first of the Āchāryyas to manifest his inclination, in an elementary form, for the worship of Krishna as his Consort. In this respect he stands alone among the followers of Sree Madhva. For this reason the followers of Sree Chaitanya regard Sree Mādhavendra Puri as the germinating seed of the tree of loving devotion that was manifested to the world in its fully developed form by Sree Chaitanya.

These points of contact and difference will be dealt with more fully as we have occasion to examine, in the following pages, the details of the devotional developments of Nimāi Pandit. The Lord accepted initiation from Sree Iswara Puri in order to satisfy the requirement of the scriptures that the *mantra* cannot be efficacious except within the spiritual communion. In other words spiritual activity is not a wholly individualistic affair. We have seen above that the *mantra* concerns the individual as regards its reception and practice of recital. But at the same time the *mantra* withdraws the individual spiritually from the society of those who are uninitiated. If the individual continues his affinity with the uninitiated after his initiation in ways that are adverse to his newly-formed spiritual connection, the *mantra* loses all its efficacy. This implies, and is a corollary from, the exclusive nature of the service of the Absolute and also lays down the nature of spiritual relationship among the servants of Godhead, which is categorically different from what prevails in the society of those who do not consciously serve the Divinity. It was in order to observe this fundamental condition of entry into the spiritual sphere, laid down in the Scriptures, that Nimāi Pandit went through the form of spiritual initiation at the hands of Sree

Iswara Puri who belonged to one of the four theistic communities recognised by the Scriptures. The New Dispensation does not, therefore, claim that it is altogether New. It does not believe but on the contrary only fulfils the requirements of the Scriptures in the most effective manner. The Scriptures had announced that the New Dispensation for the Iron Age will be given by the Lord Himself and that the form of worship, that will be thus established, will be the congregational chant (*samkirtana*). There was, therefore, sufficient Scriptural authorisation for the establishment of the New Worship without reference to the existing theistic communities who possessed apparently somewhat different methods of worship. But the New Dispensation was to be accomplished, and could be accomplished, according to the Scriptures and in no other way than by the recognition of the necessity of initiation into one of the authorised theistic communions. The Lord subsequently took the trouble of bringing about the spiritual reconciliation of the apparent differences of the four Vaishnava Communities, by giving to the world the complete explanation of the function of the soul revealed by the Scriptures. The Teachings of Sree Chaitanya in fact gathered up those of the former Āchāryyas in a Scriptural Synthesis of a supremely higher order. His full interpretation of the service of Sree Sree Rādhā-Govinda, Embodied in His Career, is not identical with the teaching or practice of any of the four Vaishnava Āchāryyas, but the further and complete working out of the fundamentals of the teachings of all of them has been one of its inevitable achievements.

That the *mantra*, which had been received by Nīmāi Pandit from Sree Iswara Puri who had got it from Sree Mādhabendra Puri, was to bear fruit in an ample measure, did not take a long time to manifest itself. Shortly after His Initiation, as Nīmāi Pandit was one day engaged in meditating of the *mantra* in His privacy, the impulse of loving devotion, which had been gathering strength, burst through all restraints and showed itself in unique external manifestations. The Lord was heard to be crying with a loud Voice in the act of reciting certain verses from the Scriptures, the import of which is as follows,—‘ Oh Krishna! Oh My

Darling! Sree Hari, My Life! Oh, whither hast Thou gone after stealing My Heart? I, indeed, got My Lord;—but where is He gone?"

The Lord went on crying and reciting these verses and rolling on the ground till His Whole Beautiful Frame became gray with the dust, while He was thus immersed in the liquid bliss of loving devotion. The Lord, indeed, cried at the top of His Voice, in the pang of a Deep Agony, 'Whither, Darling Krishna art Thou gone thus abandoning Me?' His great restlessness under the impulse of loving devotion appeared all the more strange as the Lord had formerly been distinguished by the quality of His extreme reserve on the subject of religion. The Lord rolled on the ground and cried aloud. He was adrift on the ocean of loving separation from Himself.

This gradually brought all His pupils to the spot who succeeded, after prolonged endeavours, with the greatest tenderness and loving care, in restoring Him to His normal condition. But the Lord did not change His Purpose. He now proposed to His students that they should at once return to their homes. He was resolved on His Part not to enter the world again. He was resolved to go to Mathurā to find Krishna, the Lord of His Life. All the students appealed to Him, by every possible method, to persuade Him to be calm. But the Lord of Vaikuntha, deeply immersed in the *rasa* (mellowing liquid) of devotion, could find no rest in His Heart under His great anxiety and did not know where to stay. In this condition the Lord, without the knowledge of any of His associates, set out for Mathurā, by the impulse of love for Krishna, towards the closing hours of night on one of these days. He moved forward on the road with the piteous cry, 'Oh Krishna! Oh My Darling! Where shall I find Thee?' When He had proceeded a certain distance in this manner the Lord heard a celestial voice saying, 'Jewel of the twice-born, forbear to go to Mathurā for the present. There will come the proper time for going there. Thou wilt go there when the time will arrive. Retrace Thy Steps Home to Nabadwip for the present. Thou art the Lord of Sree Vaikuntha. Thou hast appeared in the world for the deliverance of the people, with all

Thy Own. Thou wilt freely give away the treasure of loving devotion to the world by performing the *kirtana* through the infinity of the worlds. Thou has appeared in the world to give away to its denizens the good, by whose mellow quality Brahmā, Shiva, Sanaka and their associates, are distracted with joy and which is sung by the Great Lord Ananta Himself. This is known to Thyself. We are Thy servants and we speak as Thou Desir-est. Therefore, have we made this submission at Thy Feet. Thou art Providence Himself. Thou art the Master. What Thou will'st is never thwarted by opposition. Therefore Supreme Lord, may Thou be pleased to return to Thy Home. May Thou come again to see the town of Mathurā after a time.' On hearing the Voice from Heaven Sree Gaursundar was persuaded to retrace His Steps with a glad Heart. Coming back to His lodging, the Lord prepared to return Home with all His disciples with the purpose of making manifest to the world the function of loving devotion to Krishna.

The reader is introduced with staggering suddenness into an atmosphere which is not at all familiar to him in his normal mundane existence. If he is disposed to exercise his judgment at all he might be inclined to suppose the exhibition of love for Krishna as the effect of a strong emotion on a naturally and extraordinarily sanguine temperament. But he is at once assured by Thākur Brindāvandās that prior to His Initiation Nimāi Pandit did not wear His Heart on His sleeves. He was, on the contrary, possessed of a depth of reserve that baffled all penetration. This is the description of an unusually balanced temperament. It also fully accords with the respect and dread with which, as a Professor, Nimāi Pandit was universally regarded by His fellow townsmen. His Fame as Professor had not remained confined to Nabadwip. The leading Professor of Nabadwip was at that time, as now, the greatest savant of the whole country. All this implies neither a morbid sentimentalism nor the lack of a balanced intellect.

Attempts have been made on the testimony of nobody but by most illogical inference from the events of His subsequent Career regarded from the dishonest sceptic's point of view, to give publi-

city to the opinion that Nimbālī Pandit was never a particularly brilliant scholar. He was only the teacher of Vyakarana which has been described by one of His associates, who became subsequently His devotee, as a subject of study fit for children. This, it has been supposed, proves that Nimbālī Pandit was not a great scholar. But this view does not take into consideration the testimony of the earliest accounts of His Career which informs us that He was the greatest scholar of Nabadwip of His time and in all branches of knowledge. They are also careful to inform us that it was His Favourite Pastime to go about the streets in the company of His pupils challenging every one to learned controversy with Him in any branch of study. The work of Thākur Brindāvandās was written within less than forty years of the Disappearance of the Lord. We find that the Lord met and defeated in open controversy all the scholars of all parts of India. This could not be regarded as even an *exaggerated* account of the *neurotic* performance of a mad sentimentalist. Those, who are at all acquainted with the nature of theological controversies in India, should be aware that it is no child's play to defeat an Indian Pandit in open controversy in His subject.

But there is far more convincing proof of His perfect rational sanity than all this. The theological system, which is the Teaching of Sree Chaitanya, remains intact to this day. Some indications of its nature have already been available to the reader of the foregoing pages of this Narrative. It is for the reader to judge whether they constitute a revolutionary and unparalleled advance on every system of every school that has been prevalent in the world before or since His time. But that, which has been placed before the reader, is only that infinitesimally small portion that bears to be conveyed in the defective vocabulary that is at our disposal for the purpose. No vocabulary of this world can touch even the outermost fringe of the Absolute Truth Whose Complete Face is presented by the Career of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya, the Absolute Himself, in the Agony of an endless striving for beholding Himself as He really is.

The difficulty, that the worldling has to overcome in order to be won to a rational faith in the Transcendental Nature of

the Absolute, is that he is made by all his cherished habits of education and association to believe implicitly in the testimony of his senses. When Nimbālī Pandit is found by one's eyes to be no more than a human being like oneself, it should be impossible to be won over by mere theological arguments to a stable conviction of His Transcendental Nature. It would be still less possible to believe in His Divinity by the same method.

This natural disinclination to believe in His Transcendence would not be diminished by the closest possible scrutiny of His Career from the confirmed empiric point of view. The ordinary empiric attitude is to expect to find transcendence in the form that must wholly bewilder the understanding by the manner of a miracle. If Nimbālī Pandit possesses a Body which can be touched by my hands, seen by my eyes, how can such Body be regarded as something really extraordinary? Nothing mundane is ordinarily expected to be found in the mundane sense in the truly transcendental. Should, not, therefore, Nimbālī Pandit if He is really transcendental, have nothing in common with us according to mundane expectation?

The reply to such questions has already been given more than once in the course of this Narrative. Transcendence does not mean the denial of the mundane. It simply means that the transcendent is inconceivable to our present understanding. For example it was inconceivable to His contemporaries that Nimbālī Pandit is really a transcendental person. This is quite in conformity with the peculiar characteristic of transcendence. It need not obey, it is sure to belie, all expectations of its mundane observers. No imagining on the part of the empiricists, by the negative method of analysis of mundane experience, can enable him to get to the real plane of transcendence. It is only by the mercy of the latter that he can have any access to him. Transcendence reserves the right of showing, or not showing, himself to the mundane spectator. He refuses to disclose his nature to one who does not desire to serve the Truth. This is not at all unreasonable, as we all recognise the paramount duty of serving the Truth in order to be enabled to realise our own proper nature by reference to the Truth.

The theory of miracle, in the sense in which the term is ordinarily supposed to stand for a transcendental occurrence, must be wholly discarded if we are to be enabled to approach the subject of transcendence in the truly scientific way. The power of performing miracles, in the ordinary sense of that term, cannot and need not be attributed to the Divinity. The Transcendence of Godhead consists in this that He does not require any extraneous proof of His Divinity to maintain His Transcendence. He is everything without being anything. This is the Real Nature of His Transcendence. Godhead has been accordingly described in the Bhāgavata as possessing a Medium Form. In other words there is *prima facie* nothing extraordinary at all about Godhead as He really is. This is the proof of His Supreme Freedom from all form and convention. The Divinity is also declared to have a Specific Form of His own *Who is like the human*. This is not proved to be untrue for the reason that it is nothing apparently extraordinary to the judgment of man. The Human Form of the Divinity is not the human form of non-Divine man. Sree Krishna is free from all limiting connotations of the term ‘man’ and is at the same time Human in a manner that is inconceivable to man himself.

Such a view no doubt provides a capital opportunity for cheats and hypocrites to come forward as the Avatāras of Godhead, an opportunity that has not also failed to be exploited in the most shameless way, specially in this country. But the exhibition of such monstrous wickedness by all the sinners of this world, will be no palliative for the error of those who are, with equal hypocrisy, thereby led to hold to any belief which they know very well to be radically opposed to their own basic conception of the Nature of the Divinity. No hypocrisy, not even that of the most subtle kind, is naturally permitted to trespass into the Realm of the Absolute, for the simple reason that it happens to be a revolt against the service of the Truth as He is.

Nimāi Pandit cries like a mad-man for Sree Krishna. He does nothing else, but always longs for the sight of Krishna. Who then is this Nimāi Pandit and Who also is this Sree Krishna

to Whom He realises Himself to be so exclusively attached by love?

We have to turn to the Bhāgavata for understanding the meaning of this Extraordinary Conduct. The *shlokas*, which Nimāi Pandit was reciting as he wept loudly in His Agony of Separation from Krishna, are to be found in the Bhāgavata. Krishna is leaving for Mathurā. The *shlokas* express the grief of the milkmaids on that occasion. It is on the plane of Braja that Nimāi Pandit finds Himself in consequence of His Initiation. He is turned into a denizen of Braja. That is now His real plane, while this world only serves to increase His Sense of Separation from Krishna. In order to enable the reader to avoid any gross misunderstanding of the nature of the spiritual function itself, manifested in the Activities of Nimāi Pandit from this time, we shall try to set forth in the next chapter a few additional considerations towards the elucidation of His Conduct as Devotee of Krishna.

CHAPTER XXIV

HIS INITIATION AND AFTER

THE method of service by the mood of separation is the distinctive feature, the differentia as it were, of the religion of pure devotion that is exhibited by the Conduct of Nimbā Pandit after His Initiation. It is this which makes the religion of pure devotion the antipode of the worship (?) of Material Energy by the mood of enjoyment represented by the gross type of the Shākta Cult. The worship of Godhead, being located on the transcendental plane, cannot be practised in its positive or substantive form on the material plane.

But neither is the spiritual function performed by the method of abstention from material enjoyment. The method of abstention is a radically unnatural, hypocritical and pessimistic attitude. Why should a person abstain from the ordinary activities of this world? If one loses any organ of sense should it be regarded as any cause for congratulation in itself? Any deliberate attempt to be deprived of the functions of all the senses, cannot be supposed, for the same reason, to be either desirable or equivalent to any positive function on the transcendental plane. Moreover the process itself of being deprived of one's senses is really impracticable. Any offence against Physical Nature is automatically punished by an equally violent re-action. Nature always takes her revenge.

The sensuous aptitude is the natural condition for the physical body under the direction of the mind which is dependent on the sense-organs for all its activities. This is the fact. The world is not an illusion, to be got rid of by the mere desire of any person. Those, who believe in the philosophy of illusion and the omnipotence of the mind, fall thereby only more deeply into the clutches of the sensuous nature. The victims of cynicism may not be

themselves prepared to admit the sterile failure of their cherished misconceptions, but it is none the less patent to all impartial observers.

When, therefore, it is stated that Sree Gaursundar practised the pure devotion of Krishna by the Mood of Separation, as distinct from that of material enjoyment practised by the elevationists (or materialistic Shaktas), it is not to be supposed that He necessarily belonged to the opposite camp of equally materialistic ascetic salvationists. As a matter of fact He belonged to neither materialist camp. He was acting according to the pure dictates of the soul when he wakes from his mundane stupor to find himself wholly off his proper plane in this world. The plank of the elevationists as well as of the salvationists offered Him the alternative aspects of the perverted spiritual function that prevails on the mundane plane. Elevationism is fruitful of transitory positive activities which are essentially irrational in their nature, although they seem to be true for a time; while Salvationism offers freedom from the round of such activities by substituting in place of the positive a number of impracticable, negative, equally irrational and transitory activities. The stuff in either case is the same, *viz.*, an unintelligible existence depending on the physical senses for its functioning. It is, therefore, no wonder that the Salvationists should consider himself saved only by his total immunity from the shackles of his present unwholesome existence as a thinking individual with compulsory positive tantalising functions.

The quarrel between Elevationism and Salvationism is as old as the hills. It has also remained the eternal Gordian Knot which cannot be untied by any earthly thinking. Each can be justified only by including the other which is logically its direct negation. This vicious circle is the very plane of all empiric thinking on the subject of itself.

Nimai Pandit was perfectly aware of the insoluble nature of this problem of empiricism and He took care not to embrace either of those alternatives. He found Himself instead on the real positive plane of the Absolute. This plane is not one of sensuous activities at all. On the mundane plane the senses demand their own

gratification. On the spiritual plane the senses are found to be absolutely free from this hankering. The sensuous hankerings of the Elevationists are capable of being only suppressed. The Salvationists are never cured of their longing for material enjoyment which is indirectly or directly the very stuff of all existence on the material plane.

If I suddenly find myself on a plane where the senses do not require their own gratification, I should be left without any motive for active existence. This is the seemingly rational conclusion of the Salvationists. But Nimāi Pandit did not find that it is really so. He found that He was being prevented from exercising the proper function of His Senses by His Separation from the only Object towards Whom it is worthy of being performed. He found no worthy function to be performed by His senses towards this world. He desired an infinity of functions to be performed towards the Absolute. But the Absolute had ceased to be accessible to Him after a sudden momentary revelation. This was the plight in which He found Himself.

The empiric critic might be inclined to agree to this for a reason of his own. He may think that such a state is identical with the goal of the Salvationists. If Nimāi Pandit did nothing but cry for Krishna night and day, did He not thereby limit Himself to the minimum of barren transitory performances which is the cherished goal of ascetic Salvationists?

But as a matter of fact the ascetics themselves of that period did not recognise the Performances of Nimāi Pandit as coming under the requirements of Salvationism. They said that He was only a soft-hearted sentimentalist. They scorned His Company and His Philosophy, as being utterly incompatible with a life of austerities.

Nimāi Pandit was, therefore, out of His element both among Elevationists and Salvationists. Neither could He find any other Footing of His own in this world. Thereupon He behaved as one who is distraught with a great sorrow, and found no consolation except in the talk of Krishna. His sorrow was that He had found Krishna but that He had been immediately forsaken by

Him. He had lost sight of Him. But He could not live without seeing Him. His only concern was to find Him again. He was interested in the company and talks of those who were attached to Krishna and who might enable Him to find Krishna. He had no duties till He found Krishna. Can such a Person be described as a Salvationist who seeks freedom from the miseries of his individual existence? Or can He be regarded as an Elevationist, who is bent upon finding his goal in the gratification of his own senses?

Nimāi Pandit gave up all earthly occupation from the moment of His Initiation, devoting Himself heart and soul to the Search for Krishna. Did He also expect to find Him? He was engaged in this Search for the rest of His Career. The Search served to intensify the pang of separation from His only Beloved. He ceased at first to care for the ordinary duties of a householder and finally renounced the world and lived away at Puri, far from His widowed mother and loving consort, who were left to be taken care of by, and to care for, Krishna, in His place.

Such a course, although at first sight it seems to bear a close external resemblance to Salvationism, is radically different from the same. To love Krishna is the *summum bonum* of all animation. The love for Krishna had been aroused in Nimāi Pandit as the result of His Initiation. But from the very beginning it had the form of the Anguish of Loving Separation from the Object of His Love. This was the fulfilment, brought about by the process of Initiation, of His spiritual need. He had gained the *summum bonum* in this form.

If one is seriously disposed to settle down in a contented mood in this world, such a person cannot be regarded as possessing an iota of real love for Krishna. Krishna is never to be found in this world. It is also necessarily impossible to serve One Who cannot be found. A person, who is favoured by the sight of Krishna, is thereby deprived of all taste for the life on the plane of sensuous existence that alone is available in this world. In this terrible predicament what is such a person to do for passing his time?

Krishna shows Himself to the neophyte only once, at the moment of the fulfilment of the probationary stage of his spiritual pupilage, and immediately vanishes from his view. This, indeed, sets him on the real quest. Till the novice has been favoured by the sight of Krishna he has no love for the Real Krishna. The instant he is blessed by the sight of Krishna he finds Krishna to be his only Beloved and he is ready with the offer of his all for His service. But Krishna has no need for the things of this world. The pure soul, who has once been blessed by the sight of Krishna, is thereby enabled to know also this perfectly well. He, therefore, on his part does not expect nor want that Krishna should actually allow Himself to be served by the offerings of mundane things. In other words that form of worship, which bears the Scriptural designation of *archana*, cannot also have an exclusive attraction for such a person.

It is possible to worship Godhead by means of the objects and thoughts of this world. But this form of worship can be but symbolical at its very best. It is not possible to attain to the substantive spiritual service of Godhead on the mundane plane. But notwithstanding this necessary reservation the process of worship represented by *archana* possesses the greatest value during the period of novitiate on the path of spiritual endeavour. It is not also correct to say that *archana* is symbolical worship. It should be described as the practice of learning to regard all mundane objects as being unacceptable to Godhead. The food, which is offered to Krishna by the process of *archana*, is not the mundane eatable. But it is nevertheless offered to Him by uttering the formula that the act of such offering is only the mental function which has a correspondence in the spiritual sphere and that the offering is therefore, made by means of the formula which shields the worshipper against mistaking the mundane act for the spiritual. The person who performs *archana* is required, as the initial act of the process, to try to realise that it is his soul who is offering worship. After this attitude has been assumed the object of worship and the articles of offering are regarded as further items in a corresponding function. The mantras impress this vital difference on the mind of the worshipper. All this pre-

caution is necessary in order to guard oneself against the profane error that the articles of offering or any mundane figure of the Object of worship to Whom they are offered or the mind or body of the worshipper, are the entities engaged in the service of Godhead on the spiritual plane. The *mantra* says that they are not. The *archana*, however, is not a symbolical process. The worshipper is instructed not to suppose that he is doing anything which can be conceived, either symbolically or otherwise, as at all like the spiritual process on which he is engaged. The *mantra* forbids him to exercise his mind at all on the subject.

The consideration, that affords the real clue to the spiritual significance of the method of *archana* as a valid form of worship, is to be sought elsewhere than in the visible items actually employed in the worship. The process derives its spiritual value from the fact that it has the sanction of Godhead Himself. It is, of course, perfectly conceivable that a person should be disposed to cherish the firm conviction that *no* entities of this world can have any *locus standi* on the spiritual plane. It should also be possible to devise an infinite variety of forms and processes of worship based on such conviction. But if the conviction were acted up to under those forms, would it help us to get rid of our present doubts and difficulties? Our unbiased reason should hold out no hope of any such possible consummation. But if once it could be rationally admitted that the process has the Sanction of Godhead we would have no further objection to it even on the rationalistic grounds. In other words it is not sufficient for any form of worship to be rationalistic in the conditioned sense. The rational instinct itself requires that there must be a Supernatural sanction, not for reinforcing the rational but, for endowing it with the substantive spiritual value. Human emotion is as much a mundane phenomenon as human reason; and, therefore, the mere addition of human emotion to an imperfectly rational process, will not make the function a religious practice even in the rational sense.

It should, therefore, be possible for a human being to gain the goal of spiritual endeavour only by the pursuit of a Scriptural process. But what is this goal in itself? Sree Chaitanya's

Conduct shows that it consists partly of the realisation of the categorical difference that separates the mundane from the spiritual. This realisation is effected by the momentary vision of the Reality as He is. The vision is attained only for a moment in this life by the due performance of the *archana* and as the supreme fulfilment of the process. Should the process be, therefore, continued even after the vision has been attained?

The answer should be in the affirmative. It should now be possible for the worshipper to perform the worship in the manner that is required by the *mantra*. The *mantra* will now be consciously applied. But the resulting process, although there has been no external difference, will have been wholly changed as regards its significance and something more, for the worshipper. The worshipper is now no longer under the obligation of avoiding to exercise his mind on the impossible. He is now conscious of the nature of the spiritual process by reason of his spiritual experience. The function itself has thus become quasi-spiritual. After this stage has been reached it is optional for him to continue to worship the *Archā* (image) by means of the symbols.

Nimāi Pandit gave up the method of *archana* shortly after His Initiation, when He found it impossible to go through the process by reason, not of His opposition to the principle of *archana* but by the discovery, of His actual incapacity for the due performance of the valued ceremony. This point will be taken up again at the proper place.

It is the fuller realisation of the spiritual that is the cause of the non-attachment of the devotee, in the higher stages of spiritual endeavour, alike to the concrete and abstract forms of the mundane. The activities on the mundane plane are not discarded in the ordinary sense by the realisation of their spiritual worthlessness, as the Salvationist avers. All activities are expanded by a change of plane into quasi-spiritual performances. The devotee in this stage appears to an external observer as being neither attached nor averse to mundane activities. But he is not found to be devoid of all interest. He is found to be partial to hearing and talking about Krishna and unconditionally serving those who serve Krishna by the true method.

With the change of His point of view the nature of Nimāi Pandit's normal Activities underwent only the corresponding alterations. The nature of this change is not conceivable to one who is bent upon confounding the spiritual with the mundane. Neither can a mere pessimist, a mere scorner of the things of this world, enter into the purpose of the pure devotee of Vishnu. His case bears a distant analogy to that of the love-lorn maiden separated from her sweet-heart. She is not unmindful of the duties of the household on principle. But she cannot also avoid being unmindful. Her seemingly deliberate neglect of ordinary duties need not be objected to on economic and utilitarian grounds. in consideration of her inner condition.

It is no part of our duty to neglect the concerns of this world any more than to be wholly engrossed with transitory mundane interests. Those interests have a real, although temporary, value during our sojourn in this world. But they are by no means the only interests. They need not be cultivated in the spirit that they are our permanent interests. They concern the perishable and changing physical body and mind. They can have no relation to the eternal. If the soul can subsist independently of the body and mind, why should it be at all his duty to engage himself in supplying their so-called needs? It is certainly necessary if these so-called duties are to be performed with the solace of any real conviction of their necessity for our souls, to enquire in what way, if any, they can really supply the needs of the soul.

As soon as this necessity for enquiring about the needs of our soul is seriously experienced we drift into the process of *archana* by whatever name we may choose to designate the ensuing function. The essence of *archana* consists in seeking to do every duty of this world by a considered reference to the paramount needs of the soul. The attainment of such an attitude is practicable in this world. Otherwise there would be no way of the redemption of conditioned souls. The *archana* develops into *bhajana*, or actual spiritual service, which is the function proper of the soul and which manifests itself to the view of this world as a causeless hankering for association with Krishna involving internal dissociation from all mundane concerns.

There is a still higher form of worship, *viz.*, that which was exhibited by Nimbā Pandit during the concluding twelve years of His Leelā, at Puri. During that long period He did nothing but listen to the discourses of the Pastimes of the Divine Pair from the lips of His most confidential associates, Swarup Dāmodar and Rāi Rāmānanda, in the strictest seclusion of His own private chamber.

All stages of worship of the Absolute, that are available on the mundane plane to conditioned souls, are of the nature of the unrealised quest of the Absolute. It is never possible, so long as the mortal coil persists, to know Krishna as He is. If it had been possible to know Him in that way the function would be substantively eternal. Nimbā Pandit was apprised of this by the actual Vision of the Object of worship. It had made Him realise that it is not possible to serve Krishna by the method of *archana* laid down in the Scriptures and that it is really impossible to serve Godhead on the mundane plane. The method of *archana* undoubtedly possesses the merit of being the legitimate form of endeavour, available on this mundane plane to conditioned souls by the Grace of Godhead, for realising the spiritual service of Krishna in Sree Brindāvana, the eternal Realm of the Divinity. But the *archana* is nevertheless only an endeavour for realisation; it is not the realised service.

The more strongly and fully this unbridgeable gulf that thus effectively separates *archana* from *bhajana* is realised by the endeavouring soul, one is bound to lose in proportion his confidence in the method of *archana*. The realisation comes to him in the shape of the sense of utter inadequacy and impropriety of the available method. In other words, one does not become more sensuous, but one realises that no form of activity, possible on this mundane plane, can possess the substantive spiritual nature of the Divine service proper. Such a person must still continue to retain his regard for *archana*, but he is unable to be satisfied by merely remaining on the steps of the ladder by lacking the means of the performance of the actual service of his Beloved.

It is this mood that has been termed '*bipralambha*' by the Achāryyas who are self-realised, practising, authorized teachers

of the pure substantive eternal function. The word '*bipralambha*' means the Mood of Separation from one's only Beloved. Godhead can be fully served on the mundane plane only by the growing realisation of one's utter separation from Him. This is the *sine qua non* of the Teaching of Nimbāī Pandit. It is from after His Initiation that He began to practise this hitherto unrevealed form of the religion of pure devotion.

Those, who consciously exhibit by the manipulation of their external conduct that they are actuated by the mood of separation, commit the blunder of supposing that they possess the thing, which alone it is certainly desirable to have. Any real manifestation of genuine self-contradiction of this kind in the conduct of a person who is actually distraught with the uncontrollable anguish of separation from the Divinity, need not also be wilfully undervalued. The condition of the loyal, loving wife is certainly to be preferred to that of the harlot. If it is not possible to serve Krishna really on the mundane plane, one, who desires to serve Him at all, should show his sincerity by submitting to undergo the preliminary training in the form of the *archana* and must patiently and loyally wait for the realisation of his desire when he is actually lifted to the higher plane by the Grace of Godhead by His Own Promise recorded in the Scriptures.

But for the sincere soul there can be no meaning in *simulating* a condition simply because it resembles, in its external feature, that of Nimbāī Pandit. If one goes into the streets weeping and crying aloud the Name of 'Krishna', such an act should be discouraged by all means. If such a person is really actuated by the *bona fide* sense of separation from Godhead, he should be expected to exhibit his mood only to his confidential sympathisers, as Nimbāī Pandit took care to do. Nimbāī Pandit realised that the whole world is steeped in atheism, and that, therefore, it would be crying in the wilderness to ask them to listen to the tale of His woes. Notwithstanding all this precaution and apprehension, He could not always control His real sentiments. But whenever He chose to exhibit them openly, they only served to strengthen the general misconceptions against Krishna. They were so utterly opposed to the method of *archana* enjoined by

the Scriptures that nobody, who was not himself very far advanced on the path of spiritual endeavour, could be expected to understand what it really was. It was only Sribās Pandit who could recognise in it the very highest form of devotion and accordingly proposed that Nimbāi Pandit might be pleased to perform the *sam-kirtana* of Krishna in his court-yard where all the Vaishnavas would join the holy function and from where all other persons would be excluded.

The Scriptures reveal Krishna through the medium of language. The *sādhu* reveals Krishna through his spoken words and every activity. But the spoken Word is the Source of all Manifestations of Krishna on the mundane plane. The Name of Krishna is the Supreme, All-sufficing Spoken Word. The Name of Krishna is identical with Krishna and possesses all the Powers of Krishna. The Name of Krishna has greater Potency than any other Form of Divine Manifestation. The person, who can utter the Name of Krishna without offence, is the purest of *sādhūs*. By the service of the best of *sādhūs* one acquires eligibility for uttering the Name of Krishna without offence. The only method of serving the pure *sādhu* consists in uttering the Name of Krishna without offence in his company. The companionship of the *sādhu* helps the realisation of that mode of life which is free from offence against Krishna. The sole motive for leading such a life is to be enabled to realise Krishna in the form of taking His Name without offence. If one calls upon the Name of Krishna only once with the really sincere motive of service, he is freed from all worldly entanglements for good.

This simple creed Sreebās Pandit was enabled to understand by the Mercy of Nimbāi Pandit, as embodying the complete significance of all the Scriptures. The conditioned soul can only try to sincerely call upon the Name of Krishna. If he wants to do anything else, he is bound to go astray. He is in utter need of receiving all enlightenment from Krishna. The sense of this supreme need makes itself felt in its truly effective form only to the person who is sincerely desirous of leading a life of which the sole object is to conduce to the Pleasure of Krishna. Such a life is made available for the conditioned soul by the grace of the

sādhu who has himself attained the same position. The need for the grace of the *sādhu* is, therefore, the fundamental fact in the method by which spiritual enlightenment is to be sought by the conditioned soul.

The *sādhu* is not a denizen of this phenomenal world. The conditioned soul is not a *sādhu*. The redeemed soul is, indeed, a *sādhu*. But the process of redemption does not mean that the physical body and mental body of the conditioned soul are turned thereby into spiritual essences. There is no transformation of the mundane into spiritual. Just as the pure soul is liable to be enveloped by the double casing of the physical body and mental sheaf on attainment of the conditioned state, in like manner the redeemed soul finds his material casings in their turn capable of being coated or saturated with the substantive principles of spiritual cognition and bliss. This is in perfect keeping with our experience of the known phenomenon of the conditioned state. If the conditioned state is possible without the necessity of changing the essence of the soul, the redeemed state should also be possible without transforming the material casings.

But the *sādhu* has no material casings at all. The redeemed soul resembles a *sādhu* in his function inasmuch as he is in a position to render his service to the Supreme Lord unhampered by the presence of his actual material coverings. The *sādhu* is the soul himself without the encumbrance of material coverings. But the *sādhu* appears to the vision of conditioned souls in the guise of the possessor of material cases. Or rather the form of the *sādhu* to the view of the mundane spectator, *i.e.*, the conditioned soul, appears to be like the material case. If it be asked how the conditioned soul can at all see those material cases if the *sādhu* really has them not, the answer is that whatever the conditioned soul is permitted to see with his material eyes appears to him like material casing. No mortal eye is permitted to see the agent of Godhead as he really is.

Let us have recourse to a mundane analogy for avoiding any possible misunderstanding of this all-important point. If a live tiger could find his way into the bioscopic show, the spectators should have no cause to suspect that there is any material differ-

ence in the show by his appearance, unless, indeed, the tiger chooses to come out of the picture to prove to the spectators that he is really no part of the painted show. But if the tiger is content to behave as a harmless actor inside the show, no spectator need suspect that he is not the painted picture of the live animal. This impression of the spectators, however *bona fide* it may be, will be still in flat contradiction to the real fact, provided the tiger is actually the live animal instead of being the show that he looks.

The *sādhu* possesses the power of entering into the bioscopic show of this world in order to come within the range of the ocular vision of mundane spectators, without being really a part of the show. This is the real nature of the appearance of the *sādhu* on this mundane plane. His visible body is not any product of this phenomenal world any more than the body of the tiger is painted show. What appears to the mundane spectator as the physical body of the *sādhu*, is not the picture in the show, although it resembles the same to his view, but the form of the soul. The least gesture of the form of the *sādhu* is, therefore, a spiritual event. This can be known to the spectator only if he is inclined to submit to the *sādhu* for being initiated into the otherwise impenetrable secret.

There are no doubt lots of bogus persons who are passing themselves off as *sādhus*, as an easy way of gratifying their sensuous appetites at the expense of their victims. But the undoubted existence of the bogus *sādhu* can be no rational cause for disbelieving the existence of the real *sādhu*. The bogus *sādhu* does not practise the service of Godhead, nor does he propose to teach his disciple the same. The bogus *sādhu* cannot teach his pupil the conduct that is enjoined by the Scriptures in regard to one who is anxious to attain to the spiritual service of Godhead. One who is anxious to find the genuine *sādhu*, however, can never go astray. The only thing that a person is required for finding the *bona fide sādhu* is to be true to himself. If one is insincere he has no chance of finding the *sādhu* and has to thank only himself for his dire misfortune.

If it be asked how an insincere person can be made sincere, the reply should be that no one is altogether insincere. It is not possible for a person to have a thing for which he possesses no aptitude. Everyone has got the faculty in an explicit or latent form. One is only asked to exercise the function in its full measure. The appeal of the *sādhu* is made to the higher nature of every person, which is fully sincere. The higher nature is deluded into supposing that it is the same as the lower nature which also is found in every person. It is the function of the *sādhu* to impress upon all persons that the one is categorically different from the other and to insist that the lower nature should be made to occupy a position of subordination to the higher. The *sādhu* says in effect to the insincere person, "You are really sincere, as you possess the higher nature. You have become insincere by supposing that you have an obligation to your lower nature. Any indulgence of your lower nature is partial or total denial of your obligation to the higher nature. The higher should be allowed to dictate your duty to the lower nature, and not *vice versa*. It is, therefore, your only duty to be true to your higher nature. Your higher nature has got no other function than to serve the Absolute. It is in a position to do so even by the resources of your lower nature when the latter happens unavoidably to be in his way. But it is possible, nay normal, for your higher nature to refuse to take any help of the lower, in serving the Absolute. It is also possible for your higher nature, *i.e.*, your soul, to compel the lower, *i.e.*, the physical body and mind, to be employed in the service of the Absolute during his temporary sojourn in this world."

The insincere man may, indeed, pretend to hold that inasmuch as the service of the Absolute is only open to the higher nature, who is perfectly sincere, it can be no business of a person who is insincere to bother about the service of Godhead. The weak point of such contention is brought out when we remember that the function of denying the higher nature would be impossible except by connivance of the higher nature himself. Such obstinacy of the insincere person is, therefore, nothing short of a gross and deliberate suicidal folly on the part of the soul. Of

course it is open to the soul to choose to commit suicide and to say wrongly that he is being compelled to do so. But as a matter of fact there is and can be no necessity for insincerity. The most hardened sinner can be such only by option. He cannot also be redeemed unless he chooses similarly to be a really consenting party. He can be redeemed by the *sādhu* only with his own consent, by the method of his unconditional submission to the Absolute. The *sādhu* enables a repentant sinner to obtain the strength required for such submission even in the otherwise impossible surroundings of this mundane world. The *sādhu* never asks for more than it is really in one's power, by one's sincere conviction, to give.

Once the *bona fide* candidate for spiritual enlightenment finds himself in presence of the *sādhu*, he recognises in him the transcendental guide of whose help he stands in such absolute need. There is no danger in making one's unconditional submission to the *bona fide* servant of the Absolute. If one really seek the exclusive service of the Truth one finds the person who is capable of instructing him in His service. The teacher of the Absolute is incapable of deceiving any person. He may find it necessary to advise an insincere person to shun the society of insincere persons by any pretext that may tend to aggravate the malady. But the *sādhu* is never the enemy of *any* person. This is instinctively realised by all who are themselves sincerely engaged in the quest of the eternal service of the Absolute. When the candidate for spiritual service is enabled to be really established on the path of the Absolute by the causeless grace of the pure devotee, he is liable to be set upon by all the deluding forces of the Limiting Energy for pulling him down to the mundane plane if he is found to cherish any lurking insincerity. If he stands the test he is also cured of his worldly hankering and assured of unhampered progress on the path of Divine service. The crisis of his life naturally makes the neophyte extraordinarily sensitive to the dangers of his position and makes him properly enough desirous of avoiding *all association* with non-*sādhuis* lest he be misguided by their advice. The new experience is nothing less than the sudden revelation to the spiritual consciousness of the

neophyte of his relationship to the Absolute which makes him realise the function of serving Krishna as the only thing needful. The Sight of Krishna excites an unpreventable disposition for His service which is recognised as the *summum bonum*. Thenceforward the only function of the awakened soul resolves itself into a sleepless endeavour for retaining and augmenting his new-born attachment to the Lotus Feet of Krishna.

There is a real danger of losing one's attachment to Krishna as long as the physical cases continue to be in one's way. By their means it is always practicable to cultivate the contrary disposition of seeking one's own sensuous gratification from the things of this world. The presence of the two material bodies is also an effective bar in the way of all access to the substantive plane of the Absolute. The service, that it is possible for the redeemed soul to render while he still continues to retain the entanglements of his material cases, is probationary service under the unconditional guidance of the *sādhu*. The whole duty of such a soul consists in obeying the *sādhu*. Krishna has, indeed, been seen by the grace of the *sādhu*, but the vision is not capable of being retained till Krishna is pleased to divest the soul of his mortal coils. The memory, however, persists by the grace of the *sādhu*. If the service of the *sādhu* is relaxed the memory about Krishna also tends to lose its spiritual significance. It is only by the continuous and exclusive service of the *sādhu* that one has any chance of retaining the memory of the Divine Event. If there is no real memory there can be no real relationship with the Absolute. No amount of punctilious observance of external conduct can restore to one's activities the spiritual character when once the tie of living memory is snapped.

The *sādhu* cannot be served in the way in which a person of this world is said to be served. The *sādhu* is a transcendental person. He can be served only on the transcendental plane. He is not served by the mundane aptitude of his service-holder. This is the meaning of the Scriptural dictum that it is only by the method of unconditional obedience that the *sādhu* has to be served. The way, in which the *sādhu* requires to be served and is actually served by his disciples, cannot for this reason be at all understood

by the uninitiated. Empiricists may think that they are justified in adversely criticizing the perfectly pure conduct of the devotee from the angular point of view of their mundane plane. They are apt to think that if the devotee really belongs to the transcendental plane, his conduct would be of an extraordinary kind and would also appear as such to all mundane spectators. Empiricists expect miracles and are prepared to serve only persons who are able to gratify their atheistical demands. But the devotee of Krishna lives above all expectations and performances of the worldling. It is no part of his business to seek to satisfy any expectations of any mundane person. It is the only duty of the worldling to try to understand in a spirit of humility and reverence why the *sādhu* claims to be able to serve the Absolute without having to perform miracles that alone are claimed to be recognised as spiritual manifestation by unbelievers.

When Sree Krishna-Chaitanya did nothing but cry for the Sight of Krishna, after He had been initiated into the transcendental service of Godhead by the grace of Sree Iswara Puri, His contemporary worldly spectators affected to regard His conduct to be absolutely sterile and wholly below the mark of their fanciful theories of the spiritual function. They could have been mystified by the manifestation of miraculous powers and some would have fallen at His Feet for obtaining 'boons' in the shape of extended scope for the gratification of their sensuous appetites. But all were sadly disappointed when they discovered that the Conduct of Sree Krishna-Chaitanya did not offer the least prospect of their worldly advancement. They turned into relentless opponents of the Lord when they found out later that the teachings of Sree Chaitanya were necessarily most radically opposed to their own cherished supposed interests and convictions.

Those who hold the view that the practice of spiritual service of Sree Krishna is conducive of social, political or physico-mental welfare (?), betray utter ignorance of the nature of the elementary principles of the function of the soul in the state of grace. Social, political or so-called personal welfare, can be the cry only of those who are actually in a state of want. The soul in his spiritual essence is self-satisfied. He requires no external

condition for the perfection or augmentation of his happiness. To the pure soul the proposal of being made happy would be as unacceptable as that of being rendered unhappy. He covets neither. He has no reason to covet them even if he could know, because he is eternally located on a plane to which those considerations are absolutely foreign and inapplicable. The boatman of the fable conceived the ridiculous ambition of spreading prospective quilts on the thorny banks of the river when he would become a king in order that his bare feet might no longer be hurt in the process of tugging at the line of his boat. He could not imagine that it would not be necessary at all for him to pull at the line on actually becoming a real king. The amenities coveted by the conditioned soul refer only to the mundane plane and the adventitious material casings. The soul, when he is really free from those casings, has nothing to do with any physico-mental prospect offered by the mundane world. The real problem of the conditioned soul is located beyond the limited outlook of his fettered mental understanding. The problem for the conditioned soul is one of finding a method of realising the inconceivable function of the unfettered soul. If the soul has no physical body nor limited mind, if he has, therefore, no mundane wants, in what manner could it be possible for him to be occupied at all when he leaves off his mortal coil? It is the problem of the boatman of the fable. The boatman could not find the solution by scratching his head with the help of the resources of his actual experience. He would have been better advised to enquire of those who knew about the function of a real king and who were not limited to his unwholesome experience of a life of unedifying menial drudgery.

If a person, after being thus admonished and after being promised good things of which he can have no idea till he had actually seen them with his own unsealed eyes, is suddenly informed that he would have lots of servants to pull at the boat-line for his pleasure and that he himself would only have to take his ease on the soft cushions spread inside the delicious cabin of a boat of wonderful quality, the boatman should no doubt be disposed to bless his extraordinary good fortune and be prepared

to give up his own plans for the betterment of his condition, directed to an imaginary end.

But if on the contrary the boatman were told in a blunt fashion that he would have to tug at the line of the boat that conveys Krishna on the blue waters of the Yamunā and would have to do so without being supplied with the amenities of quilts, etc., and without being allowed to quit his hold of the line for a moment, nor to have even the scantiest of meals after the longest intervals, should he have the stomach for welcoming such strange tidings so apparently contrary to all ideas of the prospective good fortune that he had been eternally promised with all the choice phrases of the mundane vocabulary?

It is this sort of disappointment that is apt to be experienced by empiric expectants of transcendental enlightenment when they chance to meet the agent of the Absolute on this mundane plane. They have been building castles in the air from the moment that they were informed by the Scriptures that they are not physical bodies but pure souls and that the soul has no cause of unhappiness. Like the boatman of the fable the empiric sages, by ignorant inference from their mundane experiences, had proposed to themselves a condition which is to provide worldly amenities that would exceed their wildest demands.

But how can any worldly amenities be of any use on the transcendental plane? The happiness and unhappiness of this world are of no use at all for the soul who happens to be located wholly beyond their limited and temporary jurisdictions. The conditions on the transcendental plane are wholly and inconceivably different from those on the mundane. The nature of the soul in the state of grace is also altogether different from the disposition and outlook of the temporary conditioned sojourn. In such circumstances it is foolish for the conditioned soul to embark on fictitious speculations on his own resources, regarding the substantive nature of the function of the soul in the unfettered state.

So without affecting to be undeceived by the actual conduct and words of the pure devotee, for the reason that they do not serve the purposes of our body and mind, it is necessary to turn

one's unprejudiced attention to the real significance of such activities. One need not bring up the resources of worldly experience for understanding the tidings of the transcendental plane by the method of trying to assimilate them to the mundane. It is not necessary to accept them for the purpose of gaining any worldly end that one may have in view. Such ubiquity is out of court in the perfectly pure atmosphere of transcendental enquiry. The whole position has to be accepted as it is and for good. It is necessary to try to become acquainted with the real nature of what is offered as our only eternal function, from the point of view of the soul, and not from that of the body and mind.

The body and mind are satisfied only when they receive an abundance of the deceptive treasures of this world. The mind covets subtler forms of acquisitions that can no more be retained than the grosser possessions of this world which it looks down upon. This accumulative aptitude, for no purpose of the soul, is apt to be accepted as the only function of human life. But why should it be obligatory on anybody to take the mind at its word? Why should one not agree to sit for a quiet half-hour for taking stock of the permanent achievements of his life? Are any of our acquired million of items likely to endure? Is it desirable that any of them should endure? Suppose all of them could be had without any effort; would they be worth one's while to have them? Or are their seeming values due to their being difficult to obtain and impossible to keep? Is not this a veritable wild goose chase from the point of view of substantive value? If a thing is really valuable for me, why should it tend to lose its value at all so long as I myself endure?

So it is absolutely necessary to try in all sincerity to get over the habitual, but nevertheless abnormal, feeling of disappointment that is experienced by all conditioned souls when they read the accounts of the Scriptures without being able to understand why it should be necessary for them to desire to have access to a realm which seems to resemble this world in many respects but is unduly lauded to the skies by a comparatively small number of the most peculiar type of people and their equally peculiar admirers?

The answer to their reasonable question is supplied by the Scriptures and they should only have the patience to question with an open mind. If they are prepared not to accept nor desire any merely tentative solution applicable to the conditions of this temporary sojourn, they are likely to find the real answer to their real enquiry.

Conclusion of the early part of the Career of
Sree Krishna-Chaitanya.

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GLOSSARY

In using the mundane vocabulary for writing the Narrative of the Absolute the author has been obliged to use many words in a sense that is different from their current meaning. The mundane vocabulary, although it is exclusively and necessarily used to express mundane entities, is capable of being employed for expressing, in an analogous way, also the entities of the Absolute plane, as this phenomenal world is the perverted reflection of the realm of the Absolute. The following table supplies the new meanings in which many familiar words have been used in this work.

ABSOLUTE. The term has not been used in the ordinary relative but in its really absolute sense. The Absolute implies and includes the related as well as the non-related, or, in other words, the whole range of reality and non-reality.

ACHARYYA, one who lives up to his spiritual professions. In the case of the servant of the Absolute the term means the teacher of the Absolute by the method of His exclusive service.

A-CHIT, non-*chit*, i.e., non-cognitive; physical or mental, as distinguished from spiritual.

APPEARANCE. Applied to a transcendental entity, the term means 'coming within the range of mundane vision' by the free initiative of the said entity. The 'Birth' of Godhead is a spiritual entity and as such different from the 'birth' of a mortal which belongs to the category of non-sentient or quasi-sentient.

ARCHANA, ritualistic worship. Worship of Godhead as *Archā*. *Archana* is not symbolical worship. *Archā* means the actual visible Form of Godhead or any transcendental entity, and not a symbol. The process of such worship is, therefore, also a transcendental affair which becomes available in the conditioned state only by the causeless mercy of the entity worshipped.

ASTRAL BODY is not the soul but a mundane envelope that usurps in a distorted form the function of the soul, in the conditioned state.

ATHEISM is no particular creed. It involves the definite denial of the substantive existence of cognition as distinct from matter.

ATMAN has been rendered as 'soul'. '*Atman*' connotes 'the expansive function'. The 'limiting function' is foreign to the '*Atman*'.

BHAGAVATAM is the authoritative Scripture of the *Bhāgavata* or theistic school. It should not be supposed to represent a stage in the progress of theological speculation. It treats exclusively of the Absolute.

BHAJANA has been rendered as "intimate service of the Divinity" The process is wholly free from all mundane or quasi-mundane adjuncts. The

spiritual function is not a negative entity nor the contrary of mundane activity. It is substantive unhampered activity.

BLISS. Spiritual bliss has no reference to the pleasures of the senses and is incompatible with the taste of indulging in such pleasure. Its nature is, therefore, inconceivable to the conditioned soul.

BODY. The gross physical body is by no means a negligible factor. It prevents the lapse into utter nihilism of infinitesimal souls that are constitutionally averse to the service of the Absolute. The so-called 'body-less' state of the soul implies the manifestation of the spiritual body on the subsidence of the enveloping physical coil.

BRAHMANA means neither heredity nor worldly occupation. It implies the unconditioned state of the soul.

BRAHMASUTRAS. The aphorisms of the *Vedānta* offer the only complete systematic exposition of the Vedic Revelation. The *Brahmasutras* have been misinterpreted by Sree Sankarāchāryya, although the monistic interpretation of Sankara is ordinarily considered to be the best exposition of the philosophy of the *Vedānta*. Such opinion should be laid aside on the threshold of any impartial enquiry into the real nature of the substantive spiritual function.

'The arrangements of the Aphorisms are classified in four principal Chapters and each Chapter is again divided into four sub-chapters known as *Pādas* or quarters of the principal heads.* Every *Pāda* has dealt with a different subject and this department consists of some aphorisms or even a singular aphorism where five different syllogistic aspects are dealt with. Whenever a theme is under consideration of a particular *Adhikarana* we observe the five stages of dealing with the subject, viz., *Vishaya* (subject), *Samshaya* (doubt), *Pūrbapaksha* (opposite argument), *Siddhānta* (harmonised conclusion) and *Sangati* (consistency of the conclusion). The four chapters are designated (1) reconciliation of all *Shāstras* (*Samanvaya*), (2) consistent reconciliation of apparently conflicting hymns (*Avirodha*), (3) process of attaining the Goal (*Sādhana*), and (4) the desired Fruit accrued by such procedure (*Phala*)'.

CAPITALS. There has been a certain departure from the rules of ordinary grammar in the use of capitals. The initial letters of the Name, Figure, Quality, Activity and Paraphernalia of the Divinity, being identical with Divine Personality, have been made capital as far as practicable.

CHIT is pure cognition. It is different from mental 'awareness'. It is uneclipsed substantive 'awareness'. Mental 'awareness' represents eclipsed spiritual 'awareness'.

COGNITION. The term has been used in the absolute sense.

CLUB, one of the Weapons of *Vishnu*. It does not mean a club in the ordinary sense. Esoteric meaning given in the Scriptures cannot be grasped by the limited intellect.

CONCEPTION. It is possible for the mind to have the conception of the Absolute as Transcendental Sound.

CONCH, one of the Divine Arms wielded by *Vishnu*.

CONDITIONED STATE. The soul undergoes no substantive change in the conditioned state. The soul is endowed with material mind and body and identifies himself with the same. He forgets his real nature by the cultivation of this habit.

CONSORT. The word has been used in two senses, (1) the wedded wife or husband of superior social status, (2) male and female spiritual lover free from the obligations of the wedded husband and wife.

COW-BOY. Boy-Krishna bears the Name of *Gopāla* or Cow-Boy in the transcendental sense.

CREATION is the act that initiates terminable existence and as such is not applicable to any entity on the Absolute plane.

DELUDING POWER, *Madya* or Limiting Potency. The Absolute does not directly delude but His Enlightening Potency has a subordinate deluding function which prevents all souls that are averse to the service of the Absolute from having any vision of the Absolute as He really is. To the deluded soul the limited appears to be the only reality.

DELUSION does not imply the unreality of such experience.

DESTRUCTION is a mundane process and is incompatible with the Nature of Vishnu.

DEVAS or gods are superhuman persons moving on a higher level of the mundane world. They wield delegated, specified powers over the material envelopes of conditioned souls.

DEVOTION. The word does not properly express the meaning of '*bhakti*' for which it has to be used. *Bhakti* may be defined as the spontaneous function of the soul in the unconditioned state identical with the loving spiritual service of the Absolute. It is superior to the unalloyed cognitive function which is associated with it as an auxiliary, or to the pure volitional function which is also incorporated in the principle of spiritual love.

DISAPPEARANCE. The word has been used to indicate the withdrawal of transcendence from the view of conditioned souls. It implies the initiative of the withdrawing entity. It is this last named characteristic that distinguishes the process from the analogous mundane happening.

DISC is one of the usual Weapons of Vishnu in the transcendental sense.

DISTINCTIVE MONOTHEISM denotes the system of Sree Rāmānūjāchāryya. It implies the admission of the Transcendental Personality and Activities of the Absolute. It is the supplement as well as contradiction of the cognitive undifferentiated Monism of Sree Sankarāchāryya.

DIVINE PORTION does not imply the absence of absolute plenitude. The Portions are Specific Plenary Constituents of the Divine Personality and are Themselves Divine Personages.

DVAPARA is the third Age in the Cycle of the Four Ages of Indian Scriptures. As used in the present Narrative the Four Ages imply the transcendental reference and are not to be taken in any historical sense.

EGO has ordinarily been used to denote the mundane ego as distinct from the *jīva* soul.

EGOTISM, in the deprecatory sense, implying the mistaken identification of soul with the mundane ego.

ELEVATIONISM is the equivalent of *karmakānda* or utilitarianism. The object of all utilitarian activity is mundane felicity.

EMPIRICISM has been used in the extended sense so as to cover also idealism. All mental speculation whether inductive or deductive has been termed empiric as being the product of mundane experience. The spiritual is necessarily transcendental.

ENJOYMENT and abnegation are the correlative forms of mundane activity. Enjoyment results from the selective acceptance and abnegation from the selective rejection of specific forms of mundane activity.

EVIL is not a spiritual principle. It is a corollary of mundane outlook and is eliminated on the subsidence of the mundane ego.

EXISTENCE. The term has ordinarily been used to denote the eternal substantive position.

FLUTE. The Flute of Krishna is part and parcel of the Divine Personality, not an adjunct. But the Flute is nevertheless the beloved servitor of the Divinity and not the Master Himself.

FRUITIVE WORK. The soul has nothing to do with the mundane plane. Any utility aimed at by the mind in the conditioned state is limited and perishable and foreign to the essence of the soul. Fruitive work implies activity which aims at such utilitarian result.

GANGES is the name of the well-known sacred stream of India. But the term has been used to carry no mundane reference either of purity or impurity. The Ganges is a transcendental entity appearing to the mundane view as a large river. This is the Scriptural meaning.

GOLOKA is the highest sphere of the Absolute plane. *Goloka* is never accessible to the mundane vision.

GOOD, as the correlative of 'evil', implies a changeable conception of mundane experience. It has no transcendental significance.

GOPALA, 'Cow-herd' is the Name of Boy-Krishna. There is no Anthropomorphic, Zoomorphic, Allegorical or Historical reference. The revealed Name of the Absolute is identical with the Absolute.

HEARD SOUND, '*Sruti*', is the equivalent of '*Veda*' or revealed knowledge of the Absolute. Aural communication in this case is a spiritual process.

HEAVEN is a mundane conception implying a region abounding in limitless (?) felicity. It is not the Realm of the Absolute.

HELL is the correlative of Heaven.

HE, SHE, IT. The personal pronouns have always been used to represent spiritual entities. The neuter is inapplicable to the spiritual. Properly speaking 'He' should be applicable only to the Divinity; while 'she' should be

used to denote the servitor. But this distinction has not been strictly observed in practice.

HINDU. This word is a product of history. It has been used in this Narrative in its communal and historical sense. The Hindu community is pantheistic in its faith, relying on the revealed Scriptures. Sree Sankarāchāryya is the leading philosophical exponent of Hindu Pantheism. His interpretation of the Scriptures is speculative in character and not a part of the revealed Religion.

IGNORANCE. This term has been used to denote worldly knowledge and worldly ignorance. It is the equivalent of *a-vidyā* or ne-science. This ne-science is the result of self-mistakenness.

ILLUSION is the process of supposing the non-existent to be existent, whereas delusion means mistaking the phenomenal for the absolute. Ne-science is productive of delusion as well as illusion.

IMMANENCE is the equivalent of *antaryāmitva*. The Personality of Godhead is Transcendental. He is Immanent in the mundane world without ceasing to be Transcendent.

INITIATION. '*Dikshā*' has been rendered as 'initiation'. '*Diksha*' is defined as the process whereby spiritual enlightenment is imparted and sinfulness is abrogated. 'Initiation' does not express this definite sense.

KALI, the fourth Age in the Cycle of the Four Ages.

KAMA ordinarily means 'lust'. It has been used in the extended sense to denote all sensuous desires. Mundane love, as conceived by poets and philosophers, comes under this term.

KIRTANA is the form of the spiritual function that has been made available by the Grace of the Supreme Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya in the present rationalistic Age. It is the highest form of Divine service being identical with the loving service of Krishna in Braja. '*Kirtana*', literally means the linguistic exposition of the Absolute by aural reception from the succession of the spiritual teachers.

KNOWLEDGE. Empiric knowledge involves and perpetuates complete ignorance of the Absolute. The term has accordingly been used with discretion for indicating this fact.

KRITA is the epithet of the Golden Age, also called *Satya Yuga*.

LAKSHMI is the Eternal Consort of *Sree Nārāyana*. She serves her Lord by the method of reverential worship which is different from the mode of service of the Queens of Krishna at Dvārakā and that of the Brajadevis, in the degree and quality of intimacy and mellowness.

LEELA, which literally means 'Pastime', is the word used in the Scriptures for designating the Transcendental Activities of Godhead and his devotees.

LIBERATION conveys the sense of freedom from the state of bondage. Liberation implies neglect of, or indifference to, all activities both on the mundane and spiritual planes and hence tends to spiritual Nihilism,

LOTUS is the name of the well-known aquatic flower of India. It has a mystic sense in its varied application to the Absolute implying transcendental beauty, fragrance and the perfection of mellowness.

MAHAPRASĀDAM literally means 'the great favour'. The word always means eatables that have been offered to and tasted by Godhead. The remains of the Lord's tasted food, or *Mahāprasādām* is honoured by His devotees. The *Mahāprasādām* is a spiritual Entity identical with Godhead and is not any enjoyable mundane thing.

MAJESTY of Godhead requires to be approached by the mode of reverential worship or *archana*. The Majesty of Godhead is eclipsed by His Mellowess and Beauty on the highest plane of service. The Majesty of Godhead prevents the access to the plane of transcendental service of persons who are disinclined to unconditional submission to the Benign Enlightening Power of the Divinity. The first vision of Godhead that is available to the conditioned soul is that of the Majesty of *Sree Nārāyaṇa* in *Parabyoma* as the Object of the reverential service of all entities.

MARGINAL POWER or Potency of the Divinity is located midway between the Spiritual and Material or Deluding Potencies. These three constitute one and the same Power but are different in their respective manifestations. The *jīva* soul is a detachable infinitesimal particle of the Marginal Potency.

MASTER has been used as the equivalent of *Prabhu* and *Guru*. The Supreme Lord is properly *the Master of the master* of every *jīva* soul. The *Guru* is the immediate Divine Master of the *jīva*.

MATTER. The word has been used as the equivalent of '*a-chit*' implying ne-science. Matter is the measurable (pertaining to *Maya*) principle which is the cause of delusion. The Absolute must not be approached with the object of compressing Him within the scope of our tiny cognition. If we attempt to do so we are landed on the plane of delusion.

MAYA, literally the Measuring Potency, imparts to us the vanity as well as the mental and physical apparatus for attempting to dominate the mundane world, i.e., herself, by our mental activity. She is one of the three Potencies of the Divinity, the other two being the Enlightening and the Marginal Potencies.

MENTAL FUNCTION is no function of the soul. On the contrary mental function has to be got rid of for the resuscitation of the spiritual. This is not possible except by Grace. In the current literature of the world the mental is assumed to be identical with the spiritual. But mind is always ignorant, while the soul is never so.

MIND is a gift of the Limiting or Deluding Energy. Mind is a material entity possessing ignorant consciousness delegated to it by the soul who is located on the transcendental plane to which the mind has no access.

MONISM is supposed to embody the real interpretation of the Religion of the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*. This is opposed to the facts. The monistic interpretation of the *Vedānta* is a piece of brilliant speculation claiming to understand the meaning of the revealed Scriptures by the empiric method of enquiry

applicable to mundane entities. Monism establishes nothing and tries to demolish everything, but calls this process a synthesis.

MONO-THEISM is the proper Vedic Religion according to its transcendental interpretation supplied by the *Upanishads*, the *Vedānta* and the *Purāṇas*, and specially by the *Purāṇas* which are supplements as well as interpretations of the *Vedas*.

MOON is a term of endearment to express transcendental beauty and is often added to the Name of Godhead and His devotees in this sense. This accounts for the formation of the compound-names *Krishna-Chandra*, *Gaura-Chandra*, *Nitai-Chand*, etc.

MUKTI literally means 'liberation'. The term in its positive sense is defined as 'attainment of the Feet of Vishnu', i.e., the service of Vishnu, on the transcendental plane.

NABADWIP is the Birth-place of Lord Sree Krishna-Chaitanya. The word literally means 'Nine Islands'. Nabadwip is identical with the 'White Island' of the Scriptures and has always been used in the transcendental sense.

NATURE. The word has been used as the equivalent of '*Prakṛiti*', the phenomenal world. '*Prakṛiti*' is that stage of the material principle which is nearest to the spiritual.

NE-SCIENCE or *a-vidya* is the root-cause of the miseries of the conditioned state. The *jīva* chooses to be seduced by ne-science in exercise of his freedom of choice in his nascent position as an infinitesimal cognitive particle on the marginal line.

OBJECT means an entity as appearing to other entities.

OVERSOUl is the Portion of the Divinity keeping watch over the *jīva* soul in the conditioned state. But the *jīva* soul cannot realise the Transcendental Nature of the Latter even while he is cognisant of His Guidance.

PANDIT means literally a spiritually enlightened person. The term is properly applicable only to the servants of Godhead.

PANTHEISM denotes the systems of the worship of Nature-gods that is prevalent among the Hindus. Monism is a comparatively recent superimposition for basing this heterogeneous system on the teaching of the *Vedānta*.

PASTIME is the English equivalent of '*Leela*'.

PERCEPTION. The term has been used in its mundane as well as spiritual sense according to context. There is inconceivable analogical resemblance between the two.

PERSONALITY. The term has been used in the mundane as well as spiritual sense. Mundane personality is a misnomer, although we cannot get rid of this significance of the term in the conditioned state. Impersonalism represents the destructive protest against mundane personality by assuming the spiritual personality to resemble the mundane.

PHENOMENON. The term has been used to denote mundane occurrence as distinct from spiritual. There is a correspondence between spiritual and mundane occurrence, which is inconceivable.

PIETY. The term, which means a mundane condition, has been used as the equivalent of *punya*. Godhead should not be conceived as our father in the mundane sense or even analogously. Sonhood of Godhead is a much more acceptable view of the Absolute, but not in the mundane sense.

PLENARY POWER of Godhead manifests Herself in a three-fold form, *viz.*, (1) the Divine Spiritual Potency, (2) the Marginal Potency and (3) the Limiting or Eclipsing Potency. The *jīva* is a particle of the Marginal Potency possessing an aptitude for meddling with the mundane world.

PLOUGH, the transcendental Weapon of Sree Baladeva, the Second Facsimile of the Absolute Personality, Sree Krishna. Sree Baladeva is the Centre of Divine Power as Force.

POWER is not an attribute but the Associated Counterwhole of the Absolute Integer. Power is One, but is transformable and expansive by the operation of the Divine Will. Power is Predominated Moiety of the Absolute.

PREMA has been rendered as 'spiritual love' or simply as 'love'. But the English language does not possess the real equivalent of *Prema*. *Prema* is applied to love for Godhead. The attainment of *Prema* for Sree Krishna is 'the spiritual *summum bonum*'.

PSILANTHROPHISM is the exact equivalent of '*prākṛita sahajā*' cult that now-a-days passes for Vaishnavism.

PURĀNA means both 'old' and 'supplementary'. The *Purānas* constitute the largest department of the spiritual Scriptures of India. The *Sāttvata Purānas* explain and supplement the Vedic Revelation.

QUALITY is the English equivalent of '*guna*'. As applied to the Absolute Quality does not limit but only express variegatedness.

RADHIKA is the Predominated Moiety of the Absolute Personality Krishna. The empire historical method is inapplicable in the interpretation of the spiritual *Shastras*. The Name of Sree *Radhikā* is not expressly mentioned in the vedas. The service of Sree *Radhikā* is the sure and only passport to the loving service of Sree Krishna. The super-excellence of the service of Sree *Radhikā* was fully revealed to the world by Sree Krishna-Chaitanya. It is the eternal hidden treasure of all spiritual Scriptures.

RASA is untranslatable into the English language. She has been inadequately rendered as 'mellow quality'. She is the 'tasty' principle that makes her appearance in the heart fully illuminated by the effulgence of the unalloyed substantive reality.

REALITY. The term has always been used in the absolute sense. The phenomenal world is not unreal. It is the shadow of the reality and, therefore, also real as shadow.

RELIGION. The English word conveys a departmental and group notion, while the word '*dharma*' means 'natural aptitude'. '*Atma-dharma*' means 'natural aptitude of the soul'. '*Bhāgavata dharma*' means 'natural function of the devotee'. '*Vaishnava dharma*' is 'natural function of the servant of Vishnu'. The term 'Religion' has been used in the sense of '*dharma*'. But more often

the phrase 'natural function of the soul' has been used for avoiding serious misunderstanding of the subject-matter, although the rendering is both clumsy and verbose.

RENUNCIATION of the world does not mean the avoidance of external relationship. Such avoidance is not practicable as long as the mortal coil persists. Renunciation means turning one's face away from the world towards Godhead. God and Mammon do not lie in the same line. One who has his face turned towards Godhead can have no attachment to the world and its concerns. Renunciation is the negative side of spiritual living. The corresponding Sanskrit words are '*vairāgya*', '*sannyās*'.

REVELATION is the equivalent of '*prakāsha*'. Revealed Truth does not become accessible to the mind but to the soul by freeing the *jīva* from the thralldom of mental function which stifles his spiritual vision.

SACRIFICE. The term has been used as the equivalent of '*yajna*'. The offering of mundane activities to Godhead is not identical with the spiritual function. Service of the Divinity is located on the transcendental plane. *Sannyās* or renunciation of the world for the purpose of engaging exclusively in the service of Krishna is the real sacrifice signifying the awakening of the serving aptitude which belongs only to the 'soul'.

SADHU. The term has sometimes been rendered as 'saint'. *Sādhu* is a transcendental person. He is the agent and servant of Krishna.

SALVATION implies reference to the state of bondage. The service of Krishna is unconditional.

SANNYĀS or renunciation is of two kinds. Enlightened (*vidvat*) *sannyās* is attained on the manifestation of the serving disposition of the soul. Renunciation of the world indicative of a real desire for the spiritual service of the Divinity is *vivitshā sannyās*.

SATYA YUGA, same as *Krita Yuga*.

SCRIPTURES. The *Shāstras* are of two kinds, viz., (1) spiritual and (2) non-spiritual. The four *Vedas*, *Mahābhārata*, the original *Rāmāyaṇa* and the spiritual *Pancharātra* and all *Shāstras* that conform strictly to these, form the body of the revealed literature. The other so-called *Shāstras* are a snare and productive of delusion.

SENSE. The word has been used both in the mundane and spiritual sense according to context. This usage does not imply Anthropomorphism. There is correspondence between the mundane and spiritual which makes the narration of trancendental events in the mundane vocabulary really possible.

SERVICE is the English equivalent of '*seva*'. It has never been used in the mundane sense. The mundane conception refers to a form of activity for the satisfaction of oneself conceived as mundane entity or for the satisfaction of other mundane entities. The underlying motive in both cases is gratification of the physical senses by some sort of supposed domination over mundane entities.

SEX. The term has been used both in the spiritual and mundane sense according to context. The male and female forms and organs also have their

inconceivable spiritual analogues. Mundane sexuality eclipses the spiritual faculty and ceases automatically on the resuscitation of the latter.

SHASTRA. See under 'Scriptures'.

SIN. The term has been used in the sense of '*pāpa*'. The soul is incapable of contamination. The idea of sin is a purely mundane conception. There is no sin on the plane of service. Wilful disobedience to Godhead is possible by reason of the nature of the *jīva* soul as a detachable particle of the Marginal Potency.

SMĀRTA. Those Hindus who follow the non-spiritual *smṛitis* are popularly known as the *Smārtas*. The *Smārtas* rely on empiric interpretation of the Scriptural regulations, confounding the mundane with the spiritual.

SOUL. See under '*Atman*'.

SPACE. The term has been used both in the spiritual and mundane sense according to context. Spiritual space is called '*Parabyoma*' accommodating spiritual entities.

SPIRITUAL FUNCTION. The English word 'spirit' carries a reference to the mundane. The corresponding Indian term '*Atman*' connotes 'unlimited expansive principle'. The spiritual function proper is the fulfilment of every desire, although it is inconceivable how the spiritual function, corresponding to mundane activity, can be altogether wholesome.

SPIRITUAL PRECEPTOR, or spiritual guide, are English equivalents of '*sat guru*'. '*Sat*' means 'eternally existing' and '*guru*' means 'heavy'. The 'heavier' entity can alone regulate the 'lighter'. The relation of the disciple to the *guru* is like that of the satellites to their planet. There is an infinity of gradation on the plane of service without involving the unwholesome necessity of the curtailment of the freest initiative of the disciple.

SPIRITUAL POWER is the Divine Power Proper. All Power belongs directly as well as indirectly to Godhead and to Him alone. He is the only Master. The sense of possession of mundane power by a *jīva* is a delusion and the hall mark of the conditioned state.

SREE. The word means 'beauty'. The soul is 'a thing of beauty' and hence the epithet 'Sree' is prefixed to the names of spiritual entities.

SUBJECT. The term has been used to connote a spiritual entity as he is to himself.

SUBTLE BODY is the mental body which is liable to be confounded with the soul. But it is material.

SUDRA. The word has not been used in the sense of *caste*. *Sudra* means 'one who is subject to the triple miseries of this mundane world'. All persons who are averse to the service of Godhead are *sudra*. All persons who are born in the flesh become thereby subject to the triple miseries. Hence the dictum that 'all persons are *sudra* by birth.'

SUMMUM BONUM. The term has frequently been used as the equivalent of '*nīkshreyas*' i.e., 'the highest spiritual good.'

THEISM. The term has been used as the equivalent of '*Bhāgavata* or *Vaishnava dharma*,' although it does not ordinarily connote transcendence. 'Theos' is a coined word. The terms '*Vishnu*' and *Bhagavān*' belong to the revealed category and are as such identical with the Divine Personality. The revealed nomenclature is Transcendental.

THOUGHT. The term has been used both in the material and spiritual sense according to context. The current meaning of the term is mundane.

TILAKA denotes marks that are painted on different limbs of the body by different denominations of the Hindus. The 'upward' *tilaka* (*urdhapundra*) is the mark of the Vaishnava and represents the Temple of Godhead. The upward '*Tilaka*' is not a sectarian mark but the eternal ornament of the soul and, therefore, of abiding and universal significance. This cannot be explained further.

TIME. The word has been used in both senses. Spiritual Time is ever-present.

TRANSCENDENCE is a good word and is the nearest equivalent of '*aprakrita*'.

TRIPLE QUALITIES are *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* which may be rendered as manifestive, dynamic and nullifying principles, being the constituents of every mundane phenomenon.

TRETA is the second of the Cycle of the Four Ages.

TRUTH. The term has been used as the equivalent of '*Satyam*.' The term '*Satyam*' connotes the sense of enduring reality. Theism is Absolute Realism. Truth is the Real Absolute Personality.

TULASI is not the botanical entity although appearing as such to our eclipsed vision. She is the beloved Consort of Krishna Who accepts no service except through her. The presence of the Holy *Tulasi* ensures the Presence of Krishna. This also is not a subject for empiric dissertation.

UNDIFFERENTIATED MONISM is the most plausible and, therefore, most dangerous form of aggressive atheism. The undifferentiated Monist identifies the *jīva* soul with Godhead. This means that there is neither servant nor Master but a big zero as the Ultimate Reality (?). This is the philosophy of Buddha and Sankara.

VAIKUNTHA means literally the realm that is free from all limitation. *Sree Vaikuntha* is the Eternal Realm of *Sree Nārāyaṇa*, the sole Object of all reverential worship. The Realm of Krishna is the highest sphere of *Vaikuntha* and bears the name of *Goloka*.

VAISHNAVA, devotee of *Vishnu* or the All-pervading Lord. *Vishnu* is the Transcendental Name of Godhead implying freedom from all touch of mundanity. *Maya*, the measuring principle, is the exact antipode of *Vishnu*. The *Vaishnava* is the transcendental servitor of *Vishnu*.

VARNAASHRAMA. *Varna*=disposition; *ashrama*=status or stage. The Vedic *Varnashrama* institution is a classification of man for the purpose of ensuring his spiritual progress. There is no underlying mundane principle. The caste-system is a deliberate mundane caricature of the spiritual *Varnashrama* organisation.

VEDA means literally 'knowledge', i.e., Absolute knowledge. The portions of the Vedic *Samhitās* that enjoin the performance of fruitive work and the culture of empiric knowledge, are their deluding parts. This is clearly pointed out by numerous texts of the *Purāṇas* and the *Pancharātra*. This is the cause of empiric misunderstandings regarding the nature of the Vedic Religion.

VICE is an evil and, therefore, an entity of the mundane plane and hence not categorically different from 'sin'.

VIRTUE is the disposition for the pursuit of temporal felicity. It is a mundane principle and as such an obstacle on the path of spiritual endeavour, of the opposite kind from vice.

VISHNU is Godhead; the Transcendental Name '*Vishnu*' being identical with the Absolute. This makes all the difference between the Name *Vishnu* and those names of Godhead that have been framed by man out of the mundane vocabulary. The chant of the Holy Name appears to be a crudity to those who suppose the Transcendental Name to be a label for indicating a definable entity or conception. The Name is the Absolute. The Truth is not narrow sectarianism, but the only Reality.

VRINDAVANA, literally the wood of *Vrindā*, another name of *Sree Tulasi*. The *Tulasi* grove is the eternal favourite Abode of Sree Krishna.

WHITE ISLAND, or *Svetadvipa*, is mentioned in the Scriptures as the Abode of Godhead on the plane of *Goloka*. The term *Gauda* means 'silvery white'. *Nabadvipa*, 'the Nine Islands', in *Gauda* is identical with 'White Island'.

WORLD. The term has been used in the mundane sense, unless otherwise indicated by the context. Here again it is necessary not to jump to the conclusion that the idea of the transcendental world is an application of the mundane conception to the Absolute. As a matter of fact there is actual correspondence between the two.

WORK. The term has been used to mean worldly activity, i.e., *karma*. Service or *bhakti* is also activity but it is activity on the absolute plane which is free from all imperfection, and, therefore, from all hankering for utilitarian result.

YAJNA has been rendered as 'sacrifice'. See under 'sacrifice'.

YOGA means 'relationship'. The spurious *yogic* systems aim at an unnatural result by seeking to establish relationship between the conditioned soul and the Oversoul by means of mundane processes, e.g., by breath control, etc. There can be no relationship between the conditioned soul and Godhead, such relationship being precluded by the difference of plane. By *bhakti* or spiritual service alone *yoga* or eternal relationship between the Absolute and the unconditioned soul is established on the plane of the Absolute. The system of Patanjali does not mean any such thing.

YUGA means an Age. Four *Yugas* make the complete Cycle. *Yuga* has been used in the transcendental sense. The *Yugavatāras* do not manifest Their Appearance in mundane Time or Space.

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